

AINSLEE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS



March Contributors

MARGARETTA TUTTLE
WILLIAM ARMSTRONG

JANE W. GUTHRIE
DOROTHEA DEAKIN

YOUNG CHANDLER CHASEY

OWEN OLIVER
KATE LORRAINE



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EDITOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

for April Ainslee's

It is a great satisfaction to be able to tell you about the complete novel which will be published in the April number of AINSLEE'S. It is a satisfaction because we know that it is going to please a great many of you who have been writing to us about the author of this story, from which we conclude that those who have not written feel the same as those who have. For four or five years we have had more or less constant inquiries about

H. F. PREVOST BATTERSBY

some asking when AINSLEE'S will have another story by him, others enclosing money to pay for back numbers of the magazine in which stories by him have appeared; and frequently the writers have spoken of "The Siege of Sar," published in January, 1904, as a particularly fine story. This was Mr. Battersby's first tale.

The April number of AINSLEE'S will contain another story by him called "Last Resort," which is enough like "The Siege of Sar" to be its twin brother, because, though it resembles its predecessor, it is distinctly individual and original. If you like Mr. Battersby you have a real treat in store for you.

Another of the early stories of

O. HENRY

will be published in the April number. "Rouge et Noir" was the second story by him to appear in any magazine. "Money Maze," "Rouge et Noir," and "The Flag Paramount" appeared respectively in AINSLEE'S for May and December, 1901, and January, 1902. At that time, by the way, he called himself Olivier Henry, and through these stories he was first introduced to the public.

MARGARETTA TUTTLE

continues her series of short stories about Mrs. Carson, this fourth tale being appropriately entitled "For Idle Hands to Do." In this the lady has a rather unpleasant but extremely exciting adventure, which she brought upon herself through her rather recklessly cynical flirtation with a cave man. Some of you doubtless will think she deserved what she got, and was lucky enough to escape as she did. But, after all, most of you will be likely to feel that some allowances were to be made for a woman situated as she was. At any rate, judging from the

letters we have received about these stories of Mrs. Tuttle's, the majority of you who read AINSLEE'S understand and sympathize with Mrs. Carson, and some of you know how trouble distorts things as it often did for her.

CARRINGTON A. PHELPS'

story, "The Tempering," in the February number, made so much of an impression on readers of all sorts of tastes that we are going to publish another one by him in April. "The Swordfish and the Crab" is a story of a distinctly different type from "The Tempering," and is different also from any of the other items in the table of contents, which, in itself, is a good thing. But in addition to that the description of the human motives of the old miser and the manner in which they were modified by the gentleness and sympathy of the ex-prize fighter, make an exceedingly dramatic tale. It is not a so-called psychological story, however, for there is action in it, too.

A great many of you have expressed yourselves as being tremendously pleased with the accounts of the Western experiences of Alphabet Applegate, the British hero of

ELLIOTT FLOWER'S

series of Western stories. "The Vanishing Town," in the April number, brings Applegate into direct contact with one of the peculiar products of the West, the land boomer. To be sure, the same sort of individual is found in the East, but under conditions so different as to make each seem indigenous. At any rate, it is a new species in Applegate's experience, and his encounter with it gives the story its peculiar Western flavor.

AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE'S

serial story, "The Panther's Cub," will be concluded in April, and you want to be sure not to miss the concluding chapters. The climax of a serial story is what makes all of its preceding installments interesting, and this story is no exception to the rule.

The balance of the number will be devoted to short stories, essays, poetry, and comments on current plays and books.

The stories are by J. W. Marshall, Frank Condon, Andrew Soutar, Alice Garland Steele, Jane W. Guthrie, Edna Kingsley Wallace.



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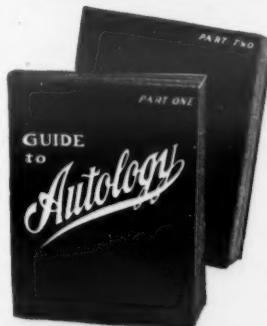
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AINSLEE'S THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

VOL. XXVII

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FOR

MARCH

1911

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* This table was prepared for the
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The purpose of this advance offer

having been achieved, the relative demand for the work in its essentially different formats having been definitely determined (this being necessary before making estimates for the printing and binding of a large edition—25,000 to 50,000 sets—of a work in 29 volumes of 960 to 1,064 pages each), the manufacturing will now proceed rapidly and on a scale altogether without precedent in publishing.

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has already begun in the case of Volumes I to XIV inclusive, and

the other volumes (XV to XXIX) are in the binders' hands. Complete publication of the Eleventh Edition of The Encyclopaedia Britannica will, therefore, be effected soon after this magazine is in the hands of its readers. The sale has been so extremely successful that in order to allow all who wish to purchase the book an opportunity of obtaining it on the most favourable terms possible, it has been decided to allow the present low prices to remain open till May 31st next. The first printing of 17,000 sets—12,000 on India paper and 5,000 on Ordinary paper—which it is expected will be finished by March 1st will, in respect of the India paper, be over-sold by the time this advertisement is read; so that those who do not order promptly will find their names far down on the list of subscribers to whom deliveries will be made in impartial rotation from the further stock of sets which has been put in hand.

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A MAN AND HIS MATE

BY
CONSTANCE SKINNER

CHAPTER I.

JESSAMY PEET could not flatter herself that her situation was unique. That in itself added to her chagrin, increased the gray discomfort of her mental horizon; for Jessamy Peet would have told any one, even the merest stranger, that her chief aim in life was to be "individual." To be different was her obsession.

She studied the fashions as assiduously as any woman, but in order that she might *not*, by fell chance, wear anything that suggested the prevailing mode. When hair mounted, Jessamy's sank to the nape of her neck. In the season of puffs she wore braids. In the high noon of curls she sleeked her voluminous black hair to her broad, rather masculinely formed head, till, as her husband said, she looked like one of those distant ancestors whose Indian blood was supposed to mingle faintly with the more recent, and much more select, fluid of the Chadwicks and the Vanroytons in the making and tinting of Jessamy Peet, née Chadwick.

Jessamy herself thought that this

latest coiffure made her resemble some of the rare old portraits in the foreign galleries—perhaps the lady of mystery, Mona Lisa, with the haunting, indescribable look. If John had drawn that comparison or had even likened her in a general way, say, to a Botticelli—but John Peet was not familiar enough with the old Italians to call them by name, even when he remembered their existence, which was less and less often as the years and a growing business in Chicago widened the distance between John Peet of to-day and the man who had gone honeymooning through Europe with Jessamy seven years before. No, John Peet looked at the sinuous, tall figure, the flushed olive skin, the black eyes, straight brows, and sleeked jet hair of his wife, and said:

"Say, Jess, you do look like an Indian, for sure."

And then, because she was his and the only really beautiful woman he had ever seen, according to his standard—his standard being Jessamy—he continued to gaze at her with a large content.

This comparatively innocent remark of John Peet's was the immediate cause of Jessamy's dull, gray mood, though

two weeks had elapsed since he made it. It might be—it was—a little thing in itself; but it had been made at such a time, in such a manner, and in such surroundings, that it had served the cruel purpose of opening Jessamy's eyes forever to the great gulf fixed between her and John Peet. As their friend, Wheeler Hutton, had said only that morning at breakfast:

"All the really great tragedies are precipitated by trifles light as air. But for airy trifles there would be no tragedy."

She had hotly combated this idea, because real tragedy had occupied her world for a fortnight—tragedy precipitated by her husband's inability to perceive, let alone understand, her individuality; and this seemed to Jessamy Peet no airy trifle. To her nature, love was, consciously, the whole of life; and, therefore, must be fed with understanding. She inevitably translated all experience into the mental realm, analyzed it, introspected and retrospected it, ere it was allowed to become a part of her—or cast aside with a clear-cut finality such as only a man is capable of, or a rare woman with a head like Jessamy's.

Because thought attended and intensified her most passionate moments, she was exacting and difficult to the one she most loved. There could be no incompleteness in her universe which was an infinity of feeling, yet bounded by John Peet's arms. In fact, her universe was her concept of John Peet; she knew no existence outside it.

Now she saw the "great gulf fixed" between her and life itself. She looked into it, wan and gray; but, true to the rare mental balance of her, neither plunged into its oblivion, nor hastily withdrew from the brink, nor rashly seized on the first handy plank of duty or sentiment in the conventional marriage platform to bridge the gap for her to cross to the other side.

When Jessamy moved she moved so quickly that most persons who knew her reiterated her mother's words: "Jessamy is *so* impulsive." That was because her thought processes were silent, subtle, and deep. She never discussed

or took counsel on her uncertainties. Silently, patiently, she searched her soul for conclusions, which when found she instantly made manifest in action.

She was remembering, even when she attacked Wheeler Hutton's theory regarding trifles as the causes of all tragedy, that John had once told her that he liked her "suddenness." That was in Florence in the third month of their married life, and on the evening of their first serious strife.

The trouble had occurred in the morning, and she had been worsted, but by no means subdued. According to her custom, her mind went busily to work—and silently—assisted by her determined will and her insulted pride, both daring and reaching decisions which should prove as vital to John Peet, when she made them known, as to herself; and while she sifted and planned she walked by his side through the quaint streets and queer shops, discussed the view, the buildings, the passers-by, with even an occasional spurt of comedy, bought trifles of gold and mosaic, and altogether seemed as if she had accepted submissively her defeat of the morning, and was resigned, content, not to say penitent.

She reached her decision during dinner, precisely at the moment when she was mixing her husband's salad—John not sharing the Italian love of garlic—and informed him of it at once. John ate every bit of the salad at a comfortable tempo, drank two cups of coffee, regarded her meditatively between his bites and sips, but said nothing.

On reaching their room she proceeded at once to pack her suit case and her steamer trunk. She did it in an inconceivably brief time, while John sat and watched her through rings of cigarette smoke. When she finished and rose from her knees, John threw away his cigarette and stood up. He said:

"I guess I've let you play around long enough for one day; but I was rather curious to see how fast you could pack those things—we've lost two trains lately on account of them. It's plain *that* doesn't have to happen. Now let me see how fast you can *unpack* and

hang up those clothes where they were before." Then he laughed aloud. "You little devil, you! I knew you were framing up some sort of mischief all day! I sensed it. And I just about figured you'd launch it at dinner when you could look across the table and see it hit, and know I couldn't do anything to you because of the crowd. I like your suddenness, but I can't let it *do* things in our family. Now, you unpack and hang 'em all up again like a good little girl, or"—as Jessamy's eyes flashed lightning—"like a *wise* little girl who doesn't have to be told twice."

Jessamy's real adoration of her husband dated from that night when she dashed all her tempers and her tricks and broke them against the will of John Peet, and learned the A. B. C. of obedience from a man who could break without wounding, humble without humiliating, and overlay his primitive methods of compulsion with tenderness and love that were full of healing to both the cause and effect of their quarrel.

She saw John Peet then as like no other man on earth. He was the barbaric lover of Kipling's First Chantey—"Mine was the woman to me." Her world was created in that hour. It rose, a new and vast universe, out of a chaotic sea, and as the enlightenment of first dawn flowed over it she saw John Peet take shape and stand upon her world—Lord Primeval, resplendent in the power of God's Beginnings, yet a man of to-day—of to-day, the wonder of it!

She was satisfied then, and for long afterward, feeling that she was mated to a spirit mightier than her spirit in both strength and magnanimity, and to a keenness and primitive cunning that outmatched her own. "The battle to the strong" fitted perfectly with all Jessamy's ideas of rightness. She belonged emphatically to that more normal type of women who desire to be mastered by their men, not to mother them; and she thanked God daily because she had found a clean-souled, big, unspoiled, elemental *man* to rule over her and enrich her being with his devotion.

Anything less she could never have

loved with the splendid fervor with which she loved John Peet; and, from her silent observings, while she danced, or dined, and talked "prattle" to many men through many seasons—she knew that "anything less" was the usual man; alas, trained in his lessness through his false conception of real womanhood, given him by unreal or insincere women.

Sturdiness of passion and rigor of law had gone out of sex relationship; and, to Jessamy, it seemed little wonder that fidelity and chaste thought had gone with them. She was in the rare wonderment of having almost inadvertently, and wholly instinctively, married the one man she had ever seen who could have satisfied and held her.

For all her analytical mind, Jessamy herself was a primitive creature, knowing no law but that dictated by her needs. John Peet became her law because he fulfilled the needs of her nature; therefore, her submission to him was not servility, but recognition.

In the first years of their life together, he had said more than once:

"I'd like to have you out on the desert with me—alone—under the stars, with no other living thing on all the big stretch of sand, but just you and me—on the edge of the grand cañon would suit me best. We'll go there some day. I think that old cañon would understand us."

Then came the growth of the business—the uplifting of great steel and stone buildings by the contracting firm of which John was manager, and for which he worked with a white-steel heat of joyful ambition. From manager to partner he took the step with a sudden leap, and pressed on toward the full control and possession of the business his energies and mind-guided forces had built.

Jessamy, deprived of the constant companionship of her husband, spent some woeful whiles day-dreaming about him and planning evenings that should be a full recompense to her for her lonely days, when John should journey with her into her mental universe peopled with her feelings and

thoughts, where every feeling was white-robed in passion and every thought accompanying it bore his mark on its brow.

But she soon found that the John who returned to her each evening was not the lover and kindred soul who had drifted, and dreamed, and loved with her through Italy. The master had disappeared, the lover lost his fine frenzy; her fireside companion was a modern business man, tired from the day's battle, emotionally inert, the greater part of his mind still in the work, busy with to-morrow's problems.

At first she rebelled, but to jangle with John wounded her soul. She could not endure that, so she strove to enter into his ambitions and plans. But John did not care to talk about those things, being essentially a doer and not a talker. So Jessamy was cast back upon herself with a wound to nurse—a wound she was powerless to protect herself from because it was made by her beloved.

She took courses in studies and joined clubs; and they made her president of the Ruskin Art because she could and did "dress it so well." She heard "talks" on "individuality," and began a search for hers, not knowing that she had always manifested it. Most women who make a fad of individuality have none. Jessamy had it, but proceeded to bury it in a fad.

She had not yet learned that individuality is mental and spiritual selfhood, and that this self, being actual, reveals itself; and she was not among those who could teach her. She hastily adopted the notion that individuality was a matter of hair dressing, body dressing, and word dressing; and, reversing both art and nature, endeavored to disclose self by means of artificialities. It was as though she wore a mask that it might reveal her face!

John, to her chagrin, noticed nothing but her coiffures. Her new-found "individuality" never dawned on his consciousness. In truth, John believed that he had fully cognized and comprehended Jessamy's individuality—the word "individuality" did not enter his

thought, however; he called it simply "Jessamy"—on that six months' wedding tour; and that he could now rest on that knowledge, and devote his analyses to steel construction.

Three years of fishing for deep-sea pearls in the shallows had brought many and divers things to Jessamy's net, though no pearls; so many strange things, indeed, that she had now forgotten what she first went fishing for. She had found her individuality; of that she was certain. She was emancipated from her old subjection to a husband, and thought she saw how wrong, how savage, how throttling to the individual self, had been the treatment John had once meted out to her, and for which she, in her then pitiful ignorance, had adored him. She began to see herself as the dominant factor in their union; she, as the enlightened thought, must rule and lead; and, some day, perhaps, John would awake and climb after her to the heights she had won, and sit at her feet and be taught.

So might their wedding journey be lived over again; on a higher plane, however, with herself the gentle though supreme power—instead of John standing over her like a sudden grown mountain, with storms gathered in his hand, as in that mad sweet night in Florence.

The contrast hurt; she turned away from it. That John had been a thing of a few months, then he had passed; and his place had been taken by a materialistic juggler of steel and rock who cared in the ordinary, easy, comfortable way for his wife and his home, and gave all his ardor to gross money-making.

The full revelation of the agonizing fact that this John could never be anything to her since she had found her winged individuality—and he had buried his in materialism, becoming in all things merely one of a herd—came to her when John made his insensate remark about her Botticelli coiffure, "Indian" he called it! It was equivalent to saying that he saw nothing but crude savagery in what was really the consummate achievement of her enlight-

ened ethical and artistic individuality. The gulf suddenly yawned between them—wide as the gulf between Sioux and Florentine.

CHAPTER II.

It was the gentle, delicately reserved sympathy in Wheeler Hutton's eyes as John made his crass remark that revealed things to Jessamy.

"Say, Jess, you do look like an Indian for sure," said John, and reached for more toast, his eyes reverting instantly to the market reports in the morning paper.

Jessamy smiled nervously as she looked apologies for John toward their guest. Hutton was regarding her with kindly sorrow. She looked into his eyes and saw the gulf open between her and John Peet. Here was a man who understood, which made more poignant the fact that opposite to her, in the person of her husband, sat the man who did not understand. But Jessamy gave no sign of what she saw and felt. Such was not her method, her only sign was action, and as yet she had not even considered action.

She and Wheeler Hutton had had many talks on many subjects in the fortnight between the breakfast when the gulf opened and the breakfast when Hutton asserted that all real tragedy was caused by trifles. She had grasped his point of view on a dozen vital subjects, grasped it easily because it was almost identical with her own; the differences, being trifling, only served to show how deep was the sympathetic understanding between them.

Of course she said nothing of the gulf, nor did she discuss John; but Hutton used him frequently as a type of the American materialism which works entirely with "brain muscle"—a phrase of Hutton's—and for the attainment of "money." Hutton's use of John to point his moral was so impersonal that Jessamy felt she could not object without appearing foolish.

She saw more and more clearly every day, however, the abysmal depth lying between her "individuality" and

John's "brain muscles"; and she knew that Wheeler Hutton saw it, too. Yet he could assert that all tragedy—this tragedy—was caused by trifles! Just because his assertion was so hideously true, Jessamy felt that he should not have voiced it at her breakfast table. Therefore she contested that assertion hotly; and, oh, irony of ironies, John Peet himself agreed with it!

"I think Wheeler's right, this time," said John; "only time I ever did agree with him. Take it in building; a foot of scamped work—that's a trifle—and your whole building may be a tragedy; sure to be some time if you don't correct the trifle, specially if it's in the foundations."

"Nothing builded on false foundations can stand," Hutton remarked, knowing that his symbolism was too subtle for John's brain muscles to discern.

"If they don't know the foundations are false," Jessamy began, impelled to defend her situation and the unmate she called her husband.

Again it was John who spoke, blindly echoing the words of the penetrative Hutton.

"It isn't what any one knows about a building, or don't know, that keeps it standing," said John. "It's what it knows about itself, you might say. You take that big mass of steel frame—it's sensitive. It's like a nerve. Set it on a block of dishonest masonry and it'll quiver—like a hurt spine. Now, maybe nobody knows about that block. Everybody may believe the foundations are solid; but down she comes just the same, some day, and the damage is done."

"The one who is observing enough to see that the foundations are false would be doing the builders a real service to point out the falsities before the building has gone far enough to produce tragedy in its fall," said Wheeler, with a kindly look at Jessamy.

"Sure," said John. "Got any more coffee there, Jess?"

Wheeler passed John's cup with an enigmatic smile, which Jessamy, with a

pang at her heart, understood only too well.

"Save a lot of money to have one of those observing ones you talk about always on the job," John added.

Jessamy winced.

"John, I wish I could care as much for money as you do for just one hour—just to experience the sensation," said Hutton.

"If you could care for *work* as much as I do, for one hour, it would reform you for life," John retorted, with a laugh.

"Oh, man," Hutton exclaimed, with a delicate shiver, "your work, your buildings, your business, are a crime! We need less money and more ideals, fewer buildings, less business, and higher ethics and more art in American life. We need Socialistic government to curb such men as you; and the law of equity to forbid the accumulation of wealth to one man. Then ethics and art would reign on earth, and ideals star the clear azure above us, and the white-bleached human soul have its way. Ah, no doubt you think me a mad dreamer, but I believe it will be—I believe it will be." He repeated the last few words in a whisper, as one who sees a vision prophetic; his dark eyes glowed.

"Maybe it will," said John; "but that's not my affair. I'm living *now*. As I see it, this is a young town, and a young country, and I've got a young business. A man to-day can't afford to give his mind and time to art, and white-bleached souls, and all the rest of your wash list——"

"John!" Jessamy gasped, but John did not hear her. John never heard interruptions when he had something to say. He went on:

"He's got to put his soul into his business if he's going to build up his country. The Socialist lot are all wrong. We've got to make money and build up great businesses, and roll up the millions, no matter who spends it or how they divide it when we are in the locality technically known as the Hereafter. The business must be made and the millions must roll up; and it's got to be done by the men who have the

nerve and the brains to do it. Those fellows—most of 'em—who are shrieking at us from the centre of a million pamphlets, couldn't do it. That's why they don't get it to do. There's a reason why every soldier isn't a general," he added, with his rare, sudden smile.

"John, I've repeatedly said that your brains are of a muscular variety. You prove it again. Money is your golden calf, and he shines so in the light of your worship that he blinds you, and it's nothing to you that the world suffers because you worship a false God."

"See here, Wheeler," said John. "We know all about each other from the beginning. We both came out of Springfield; only you were hoi-pollio-old Southern family with money and style, and I was common stuff and worked since I was a kid, while you went to a few universities here and abroad, learned to sing in a light, inoffensive tenor—I've enjoyed your singing, sure! —and to paint pictures which the academy didn't hang. Though, by gosh, Wheeler, if they're all like that 'Leaping Death' thing you showed me the other day—that one with the grass-green woman in the corner—I say they ought to be hung!"

"John!" It was Jessamy speaking.

"And," continued John, "while you were doing all this, I was going into the contracting business and making up my mind to *build*. I made a little money and came up here; you had your father's money left you. Now, I've used mine to build up a business, and of course that's made me more money, which I call more sensible than your way of doing—going round sputtering over the edge of that golden spoon you were born with—and keep tight in your teeth—that wealth is a sin and you're a poor martyr of a capitalist. Don't notice you giving away anything. The worst I could wish some of you settee Socialists would be for your party to come into power. It'd be mighty hard on fellows like you—having to *do* some of the things you've been talking about."

"John—you'll hurt Wheeler's feelings!" Jessamy protested.

"No, no!" cried Wheeler joyously. "Go on, you consistent old vandal, you! This man, this terrible heathen, once lived for two whole months in Italy—lived and loved in golden Florence—loved a Jessamy in golden olden Florence, where art is the bread and the breath of her! He even bought of his own accord a very good vase."

"I'm, I'm—liked the shape of it," mumbled John. He was busy with the buckwheat cakes. "Don't know, though, if I had it to do over again, I believe I'd go through the Rockies and the Grand Cañon. We'll do that together some day, Jess." But he said it carelessly and not in the old way.

Jessamy winced inwardly, but said calmly:

"But, John, you'd have missed a great deal if you hadn't had all the pictures and the plays and the music, and seen the cathedrals. The Rockies and the cañon can't give you that."

John thought for a minute.

"Seems to me they do," he answered, "with this difference: Art tells it to you; but with nature you have to dig it out for yourself. The pictures, mostly, and the plays—some of them—and the music—some of it—I accept, as I accept Mount Stephen and the Kicking Horse River. But I pass up the cathedrals—they're fussy."

"They're considered some of the greatest architecture in the world, you know, John," Wheeler put in delicately. The vandal was using his brain muscles to demolish cathedrals now! And cathedrals, as Hutton was wont modestly to say, were the one subject he did know well.

"Maybe so. But I can't look at them with an artist's eye because I haven't that kind of an eye. Mine's a business man's eye, used to looking at another kind of building. At that, I don't mean skyscrapers. I mean just the business of being a contractor. Business is a kind of building. And I know, as a business builder, that the real aim is to simplify the structure. Now those cathedral builders have all done just the opposite. They've complicated and trimmed and fussed so that it seems to

me they knew their main design wouldn't bear analysis. They had to hide what they were really building under its trimmings."

"Oh, you savage, you savage!" mused Hutton, and looked at Jessamy so that she inwardly writhed with shame for John's satisfied ignorance. The vandal continued:

"Look at the Pyramids—and those old columns still standing there in Rome. There's building for you! As God builds in the Grand Cañon. You couldn't trim and fuss that up. When it's outlined, it's done. You keep your little hands off then, and let it develop. That's business building," he added.

"John Peet, you're as primitive as your old cañon," Hutton remarked lightly.

Jessamy flushed—she could not help it; nor the vibrant tone that came suddenly into her voice, as she asked quickly: "Do you think he *really* is?"

"With a difference—with a difference," said Hutton smoothly, even patronizingly, and the flush left Jessamy's cheek.

John laughed as he drew his six feet of clean-limbed, long-muscled body to its height, tossed down his napkin, and stuffed the paper in his pocket.

"You can tell her the difference when I'm gone," he said. "Maybe 'tisn't only a matter of complexion."

He did not intend his remark to be significant. He kissed his wife, and strode from the room.

CHAPTER III.

"Suppose we go into the music room," said Hutton, after the five minutes of silence that followed on John's exit.

He had been studying Jessamy's face. For once she had dropped the mask; her head drooped, and her face looked as if some silent, insidious thing had swept a gray pall over her beauty and marked it for the tomb while it was yet alive.

John's careless allusion to their old-time sacred dream—the cañon—had struck her heart cruelly. How evident-

ly he had forgotten all that had made love and life for her. His words brought back the old conception of him—her Lord Primeval, standing monarch upon her new-made world, with storms gathered in his hand, and the splendor of a first and an eternal day flooding over him and the universe he ruled.

This was the man of those wondrous, long-past nights, the man of that one searing, hallowing eve of revelation in old Florence—the man who had wished for a desert's immensity in which to love her; a long, lone, starry vigil on the edge of the giant fissure with her in his arms. She remembered his words: "I think that old cañon would understand us."

Now, he was a compound of "brain muscle" and "money"; and the strange woman he had won and mastered was not worth the keeping, not worth the thoughtfulnesses by which alone such a woman can be held. Jessamy realized that, in spite of her new-found individuality, she was perilously close to the elemental, still.

The John of to-day was more modern, much more suited—except for his lack of culture—to her achieved "individuality," than was that old-time conception of him; but that other was her mate, and this, to her, was—nearly nothing.

Hutton, studying her face as these thoughts held and grieved her, saw clearly that here was a beautiful, rare creature, sick with the boredom of being tied to a clod. He determined to help her—and John, too.

He assisted Jessamy to rise from her chair, and, with a spontaneously and innocently affectionate manner—the manner of a brother, almost the manner of a younger brother—tucked her hand closer in his as he led her to the little music room, which was chiefly bay windows, overlooking the lake where the sunswept winds of May were at play lightly whipping the lumbering, slow-rolling waters till they foamed on the beach petulantly.

"Now," he said, as they reached the window seat, and he drew her down

upon it, "we are going to sit here and commune. Until to-day, beautiful Jessamy, we have only conversed; but now we shall commune. You smile? Ah, then you do not know that something has taken place? Something strange, beautiful, *sacred* has taken place this very morn—this wind-blown, sun-kissed morn—"

Then changing his tone of light fantasy, he looked deep into the woman's eyes, and said very seriously, almost tenderly:

"I have read your soul, dear Jessamy—that is the wonderful thing which has taken place."

The last words were a whisper of wonderment. Hutton was past master of the art of sublimated antichmax; he was a disciple of Maeterlinck, in conversation.

Jessamy had felt that Wheeler Hutton understood her; though the thought did not greatly please her, for she was not a woman who yearned to be understood by men or by women, only by one man. Still, when she had become aware of Hutton's understanding, she had experienced mixed feelings; having been alone so long, she was grateful for his sympathetic understanding, and she was displeased at it because it proved that he had penetrated John.

Now to be told with such deep-eyed, deep-toned seriousness that he had "read her soul" sounded to this subtle, reserved woman quite, quite too intimate. Why, she herself had not read it; evidently not, since her soul—or something within her—rose so often and so suddenly, and swept her individuality out of existence for the nonce.

Hutton saw the slight contraction of her brows, the stiffening of her figure. His voice was gently grieved as he said:

"There is one wound unto death which can be inflicted upon a friend, Jessamy. It is to let him look at the rare book, handle it, open it, see its pictures—then close it before his eyes ere he has read the full story."

He paused. She remained silent, thinking. He continued:

"Will you cast back my friendship in my face? Knowing that I under-

stand you—and your problem—will you foolishly attempt to belie my understanding by casting away my sympathy and my help?"

Jessamy was either silent or verbally direct. She was the latter now.

"How can you help me?" she asked.

If the crudity, which "came down"—as the saying is—"to brass tacks" and ignored the poetry of his introduction jarred upon Hutton, he remembered that this woman had lived for seven years with John Peet, and forgave her.

He regarded her a moment in detail. She was young, she was beautiful, she had temperament, and she was bored to death by her husband—by a clod, with brain muscles who worked all his hours for mere currency, when he might be spending the rich gold of that glowing, but still prudishly parsimonious, temperament. The clod had not known how to spend it, had never even found that hoarded gold. So much the worse for the clod! So much the better for the man who must come, inevitably, some day; the man whom experience had taught to attune himself only to what was rare and fine, the man who should understand, and so win full response.

There was something besides coiffure about her that reminded him of a woman he had known in Florence—an aroma of passion which, like the perfume of a sachet bag, indicated the presence of rich and tangible joys concealed. Then he remembered that she had been in Florence—with the clod. Oh, sacrifice! No wonder her first response was "How can you help me?" She needed help.

"I can help you, and I see how, although I cannot tell you the whole secret at once—because you are not ready for it. Let it be my grateful task to disclose it gently, suiting my expression to your subtle individuality which I understand so well."

"Do you?" said Jessamy. "I wish I did." She spoke sincerely, not humorously.

"Dear Jessamy, women never do understand themselves. Self-knowledge is unattainable to the feminine mind—

until taught," he added softly, and waited for her to ask a leading question concerning the curriculum.

"I'm sure we try hard enough to find ourselves," Jessamy said almost plaintively. "Find yourself, find your individuality is practically the slogan of our clubs. I belong to so many—all different—but the women are nearly all the same; they are finding, or trying to find, their individualities, and make them recognized. Some of them from the Ruskin—and the other clubs, too—have written books. There's Ellice Lizabet Towne; she wrote a book called 'My Soul Dreamed,' a series of fanciful things very like Olive Schreiner's 'Dreams.' We had her give a reading of them one afternoon and a little talk about how she came to write them.

"Don't be bored with all this. It's because you understand so much that I want you to understand this part of it, too. Now, Mrs. Towne is perfectly satisfied. Some of her friends like her dream about the hunter and the birds better than Olive Schreiner's; they say it has more feeling. Well, all that makes her happy—she says she has found herself.

"Now, I've tried to write and to paint because I saw other women 'finding their true selves in the creation of beauty,' as Mrs. Towne makes the owl say in her dream about the hunter and the birds—rather quaint to have an owl talk like that, isn't it? She has him say all the wise things, to make him different from the other birds."

She stopped suddenly.

"And you couldn't write and paint?"

"It was worse than that. I didn't want to. But I did it sometimes; and I went to every lecture—on everything—and read. I like to read. Whatever individuality I have I got that way. But I didn't want to find myself in writing, or painting—or what the owl said." She smiled a little pathetically.

"Some women are meant only to write history—on men's hearts; and to paint pictures—their own ineffaceable portraits—on men's memories."

Jessamy turned and looked at Hutton for an instant. Then she said very

directly and in, what seemed to him, a strangely impersonal tone:

"That is just it, and I see you do understand. I want to find myself in loving and in being loved. That is all I want in life, for my whole life long. All the rest is nothing to me." After a pause, she added with a determined effort: "John doesn't understand that."

This last was so unexpected that Hutton started.

"John!" he exclaimed. "Good heavens, no! Dear lady, how could you expect it? The law makes marriage—but it can't make harmony. Union not unison is *its* motto."

It was very difficult to speak of John in this intimate way to any one, but Hutton had said that he understood her trouble and could help her; so Jessamy, albeit with flushed cheeks, persisted.

"But—there was a time—at first—when he seemed to understand, when he seemed to be all that I demand of a man." Her tone lowered. "There was one day in Florence—I can't ever speak of that—to any one—but it began then. We had been married three months, and how could that be as it was then, and for nearly a year afterward, and then go as if it had never been? *He* has gone. I think he no longer ever remembers what he was—when he was all I could demand of a man—and a lover—and I was satisfied. How can a man change his whole being like that? You say you can help. Help me to understand that."

This was a new Jessamy to Wheeler, more nearly "awake" than he had suspected. She was suddenly wonderfully alive, her whole body moved under her draperies, even her throat quivered. It was the movement and the quiver of pain, but it was beautiful to Hutton's eyes because it portended the breaking of barriers. The gold of this woman's temperament was not willingly hoarded. Nay, like the shining metal which called to him, her John Gabriel, to free it from its earthly bondage. He was obliged to turn his eyes away from that throbbing slender throat, before he could answer her plea

in a wisely dispassionate manner. Even as it was, his voice was not quite clear.

"Do you really want me to explain that—no matter how it may hurt or disappoint you?"

"I can't be hurt any more. That was the one real thing—and it went. How can explanations hurt me?"

"That is just the point—the thing that will hurt as you have never been hurt before."

"Go on," said Jessamy.

Hutton cleared his throat, and kept his eyes on the floor.

"It never was the real thing. You had an ideal—the sort of man you could love—could give yourself to—with all the—he hesitated, shaken—"with all your heart"—he finished the sentence, controlled—"and you made it known—of course a man can always know what sort of a man a woman wants him to seem to be—she always tells, and because he knows she'll give that man most, he is willing to play the part, if the rewards are great; and you were a great reward, while you, for a while thought—"

Jessamy, rising precipitately, her hands pressed over her breast, her face white, was speaking:

"You don't think—you don't mean—that at the first—that one great real thing he was—that I loved so—no, no—you don't mean—" She stopped helplessly.

"I mean," said Hutton, "that John Peet played the part for the rewards. He was no novice, I imagine. You know, it is not on the materialistic side of his nature that John is lacking. Your one real thing, Jessamy, was the falsest of all. He never was that man, except in pretense—as counterfeit coin spent for passion."

There was a low cry as from a deadly hurt, and Jessamy dropped upon the settee and buried her face in the cushions. Hutton stood looking at her whom his words had made all woman, with every masculine phase of strength demolished, just a beautiful, intense-natured woman struck down by the fall of an ideal, and tacitly reaching to him

for sympathy and succor. Presently she spoke:

"That thought came to me once, when we came back here and he first changed. But it was too horrible. I put it away. I couldn't bear it. But it made me afraid. I've been afraid ever since that some day something would make me accept it; that it would come back so that I'd have to see it as the truth. And that is what you have done; you've made me believe it. It's true."

"And you are free."

"Free?"

"Yes. You never loved John Peet. John Peet was never anything to you, never can be anything to you. A mere outward sign such as a marriage cannot hinder such a nature as yours from finding its ideal. It exists. It will come to you. *He* will come, and you know now that you *are* free to accept the joys he will bring you—all the joys."

"Let John, too, go free. Don't shackle him with your idealistic conceptions. That is not right. He, too, has a right to his freedom and his individuality on the plane of materialism where he is happy and at home. Poor John, he has suffered, too, no doubt, in his gross way, because of your misplaced ideals and misplaced affection. John is quite splendid in his own world. He has his place."

"Let him go to it, while you achieve your goal, find your true self at last in loving, and in being loved by one who can meet and mate with you on your own high spiritual plane—if it be only for a day. The supreme moments of life are only moments, while you, dear, innocent child, have tried to spin them out into years."

Jessamy, thoughtful-eyed, rose and went to the window. Hutton said no more. He had delivered the first lesson. After a few moments, Jessamy said:

"It's strange, isn't it—but—just as if nothing had happened, there's John driving up—"

"For his lunch," said Hutton. He felt that the simple phrase said volumes.

"Yes," said Jessamy, and proceeded

to the dining room to serve John Peet with beefsteak.

Hutton followed her.

CHAPTER IV.

Strangely enough, John Peet's thoughts also were occupied with problems matrimonial. So unusual an effect must have a specific cause. It had.

"Seems as if a man can't be sure of anything these days," John began, following his own train of thought aloud, and breaking in upon Hutton's and Jessamy's converse without even knowing there had been any conversation till he spoke—this was characteristic of John. It now had its accustomed effect also—silence. John went on: "Can't be sure of your business, or your partner."

"How is that?" Wheeler asked idly.

"Because your partner has a wife. She cuts up monkeyshines with another fellow. Your partner finds it out, goes nutty temporarily, and your business suffers. Yesterday he wanted to shoot her. To-day he's making plans for a divorce."

"He is chronological at least, if not logical," said Hutton brilliantly. "Yesterday was the day of the pistol. To-day the divorce court is the handier weapon. Utility decrees the divorce court, and man is governed by utility."

"Which would you use, John?" Jessamy asked, with her clear-cut directness.

Hutton's nerves went taut; for she had not asked the question out of idle curiosity, he felt sure. Already then, she acknowledged the disruption of her marriage with John Peet!

"H'm? Oh, I don't know. No man can say just what he'd do under circumstances which he can't even imagine happening. I could have laughed when I took Willett's gun away from him yesterday—except that it's no laughing matter to see a man hurt that way. But I couldn't imagine shooting Mrs. Willett any more than I could imagine taking a gun to kill a gnat. That's all she ever was, anyway—just a buzz-

zing gnat into every open window she found."

"Ever fly in at yours?" Hutton asked slyly.

"I haven't a mosquito climate," John answered.

"But suppose it were I—what then?" Jessamy demanded.

John's eyes flashed a smile at her.

"Oh, you," he said confidently. "That's impossible. I've got you cinched because I know how to handle you," he added, and laughed: "Don't I?"

She gave him a long look, then answered: "Perhaps."

John went on with his luncheon. By the light of Wheeler Hutton's analyses confirming, as they did, her old fears, she saw in John's words and his smile nothing more or less than brutal acknowledgment that he had fooled her into submission and adoration once, and could do it again—if he should think the game worth the playing. And she had believed that she had had, and could have again, love's holy moments with this man!

"It's astonishing," Hutton commented, "how a man like Willett—a plain all-business man, an effect, really, of our most bloodless form of ultra-modern civilization—will have one moment in his life when he harks back to the cave man, the primitive creature that slays."

"Nothing of the sort," said John, in his impersonal manner of finality. "What surprises me, Wheeler, is that you make so many bad guesses, yet you're all the time analyzing—as you call it. I never knew anybody who could chew on a feeling or a characteristic of human nature till there isn't even the taste left, like you can; but your conclusions are too subtle for me."

"Willett is no primitive creature that slays. We haven't got any of them now—except soldiers and yeggmen, and there's nothing primitive about them, is there? Civilization, business methods have put an end to all that sort of thing. We give the faithless woman a decree, not a bullet. Willett wasn't going to use that gun; and I only took it away

from him as I'd take explosives away from a child. He was shaky enough to have an accident. The truth of the matter is he'd never even have said 'gun' if he didn't think it was expected of him.

"The papers are to blame for a lot of that—always throwing the idea into you that the injured husband's got to shoot something, or at least show the gun, and make a few threats, or he's no man. All rot! Let the woman go and save your shot for ducks. It gets weak men and women into a lot of trouble sometimes, trying to live up to the fool notions of newspapers—and neighbors."

"You think individuals ought to follow their consciences entirely, then, John?" Jessamy queried.

"Sure! What have they got them for?"

"Maybe Mrs. Willett followed her conscience—and its conviction."

"Maybe she did. All I say is she might have told Willett what the conviction was before she followed it so far. No man wants to hold a woman who wants to be free," he added.

Jessamy laughed a short, unpleasant laugh.

"How easily a man can part with his dearest treasure, when it's only a woman."

"Some men, not all, fair Jessamy," Hutton murmured, and for the first time she discerned something other than impersonal sympathy in his tone.

She looked at him with new interest. His expressive eyes were daringly revealing what she had never suspected till that moment. She was neither shocked nor alarmed; quite calmly she considered the question which came into her mind: Was this the joy waiting on the path for her? This the embodiment of her ideal come to her in her heart's pain and solitude?

She did not think so, but then she had been mistaken before when she thought that John was that joy and ideal. She might be equally mistaken now in thinking that Wheeler was not. She resolved instantly to be neutral and let Hutton have full opportunity to demonstrate.

"Another thing," said John, again concluding aloud some silent argument, "this idea that a man can be one way all his life in all his thoughts and feelings and actions, and then, when something unforeseen happens that stirs him up, can act in a way that's wholly foreign to his nature—is all a mistake. Sometimes the sudden thing surprises a man's real nature into showing itself if circumstances have seemed to hide it; but it doesn't put something into him that never was there before. That's a female novel writer's idea of a man. Gets me how you can swallow it, Wheeler; your sex ought to be some protection to you."

"You deny that something so great can come suddenly upon a man that it will change his whole character in the twinkling of an eye? Ah, but it can—it can!" He whispered it.

"No, it can't. If a man's got real character, he's *got* it; and he doesn't lose it every time he has an accident. If your idea was right, there'd be no business world—and maybe no other worlds either. There'd be no building anything, because if every unforeseen happening changed a man's whole character it would change his whole plan, and nothing would ever be completed, no system possible, nothing but chaos. A man's actions can't contradict the man, any more than you can build something you haven't planned."

Jessamy, listening, heard again from John's own lips confirmation of Hutton's analyses. Dogged "brain muscle" and a big, splendidly formed body were the sum of John Peet. With every word he was ringing his own knell and her liberty bell. Hutton accentuated the lesson with significant looks in her direction.

"Then not even love changes a man?" he said.

"No. How could it? When a man loves, he loves according to the sort of man he is—though he probably pretends some things for a while. Most men do, because women hate so to have a man be natural."

"A man is poor in nature who must pretend," said Hutton. "There's a say-

ing about that—but you wouldn't care for it, John; it's poetry."

"Why, I don't dislike poetry," said John, rather aggrieved. "I like some of it—not all, but some. Jess read me a poem once, and it's been my favorite poem ever since. I don't remember its name, but it's by Browning; and I only know one line of it, but I think of that line pretty nearly every day."

"Now you do interest me, John Peet; and I pray you quote me your line," said Hutton, his eyes sparkling amusement under his drooped lids.

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp."

"Or what's a heaven for?" That's from 'Andrea Del Sarto,'" Hutton supplied.

"Never mind about the heaven part of it," said John. "It applies right now. That's why I like it. The time I used it most was when I got the contract for the Wade McNutt. I think she's the prettiest building in the city, if I did build her. There's a symmetry to her, all her parts belong to the general plan, they all have the same idea—there's unity. She's not so awfully tall, but she rises right up into the air like a tower on a hill. At least that's the way I think of her. Anyway, that poem has a great idea—because the bigger you see the thing the bigger you build it."

Hutton laughed. "Now, by Heaven, John Peet, you go a bit too far when you turn even Browning into a skyscraper builder!"

"He'd have built good ones. God! I wish I'd had a chance to put up just one of those old Roman columns. I could die happy!"

"Where would you put them? In Chicago?" Hutton was laughing again. John looked at his watch and rose.

"Yes, in Chicago. I tell you that kind of building belongs in any town and any country. It talks to you, that does—like the cañon and the mountains. Well, I'm off. By the way, Jess, I've got to go to New York to-night—be back in a week at the outside. Will you pack some collars and things for me, and send my grip down to the

office? I'll have so much to attend to, I can't come back to dinner."

"Then I'll have to move, too," said Hutton.

"Why? Oh, propriety? Jess can get her mother over. Do that, Jess. Wheeler will be company for you—you like to talk the same things. Good-by, girlie." And he was gone.

To Jessamy his going at this time seemed governed by something more profound than chance. The great concept of him which she had so loved had gone—gone into nothingness; why should this Thing remain in view, to mock her?

"Well, fair hostess," said Hutton, "do I go or stay?"

"Stay, of course," said Jessamy, and telephoned for her mother.

According to her determination, Jessamy allowed Wheeler Hutton to woo her uninterruptedly, on bended knee, with song, and verse, and brilliant argument. She was free to be won; let him win her. Wheeler, who had anticipated an easy conquest, was nonplussed. Not that he was the least bit of a villain in his pursuit of Jessamy. He genuinely believed that he was doing a noble work for both John and Jessamy in coming between them.

He often remarked on the wondrous fact that he had been sent, a savior, to that household, to lead Jessamy out of the wilderness of materialism—nay, from the tomb itself, where her radiant soul had been buried alive—to a strange new country where she would no doubt suffer much, as well as have great joys; splendid joys that, enduring but a moment, should leave their memory forever. A notion which did not appeal to Jessamy, who wanted her joys continuous as well as splendid.

"Beautiful Jessamy," he said again one day, "in knowing that you will yield to me—for you will—I have only one regret: that I shall make you suffer. Yet I should not regret it—it will do so much for you."

She eyed him calmly.

"Sometimes I doubt if you do understand me, Wheeler," she said. "In the first place I do not believe in suf-

fering, if I can possibly help it. And if I yield it will be partly because I know I shall not suffer; and I believe I *can* know that. Then—please don't be offended—I don't believe you could make me suffer; and, lastly—you see I've thought about this a good deal—the whole idea of this suffering seems so unreal."

"Unreal! Child, child, you know not what you would shut from your yet untutored soul's experience! Sorrow is the tender dew on the passion flower of the ages."

"Then I shall not pluck the passion flower—till the sun has drunk up the dew."

"But you will," he retorted, smiling. "And when the petals fall and wither—as they must—you will sorrow, and yearn, without comfort. That is woman's experience, when she has a soul, and you shall not be spared it."

"Where will you be when I am yearning without comfort?" she asked, with that habitual directness which was losing its charm for Hutton.

"Who can say? What matters it where? To Florence, to Yucatan, ever on the eternal quest, ever seeking." The last two words came as a sigh.

"Seeking what?" Jessamy demanded, in her most matter-of-fact tone.

Was she provoking him? Possibly, playing with him? He determined on a bold stroke to discover. He leaned back on the cushions of the divan, crossed his arms behind his head, and played his sparkling, insinuating smile at her for a moment. Then he said:

"Seeking what? A woman to—" He paused.

"To love, or to love you?" she supplemented.

"Neither. The world is full of those! But one who can hold me after she has loved me."

"Oh!" said Jessamy. "Then that is why you say I shall suffer because when you have won me you will leave me?"

"And if it were?" He watched her closely.

"Oh, if it were, then I'd rather go for an all-day trip in the auto, alone, than

waste time talking to you—to what you are if that is true."

"Jessamy," he said very seriously, "don't you know it is *not* true?"

"I hope not. I wouldn't like to think I had talked about things with that kind of a man."

Wheeler felt that he had lost ground. He did not try again to lure Jessamy on with the fear of losing him, and he spoke of sorrow no more.

CHAPTER V.

On the fifth day of John's absence a letter came from him. It read:

MY DEAREST SWEETHEART: Please shoot a couple of clean shirts through the mail to me, above address. This town is full of shirts, but I have no time to go after them. As regards business, my trip has been very successful. Will stay over till Wednesday to cinch matters. The note in this letter regarding shirts is "marked urgent." Be good to yourself. Your own forever,
JOHN.

P. S.—Suppose Wheeler is still there, and hope he has left enough things in the world to chew on, so you won't run out of conversation now I'm detained here. One thing sure, he can't chew on me. My biographer will have an easy job, for sure; he can tell my whole history in one line: "He was a builder, and loved one woman." Hurry those shirts, please.

That day, Wheeler could not reach Jessamy at all. He knew she had received a letter from John, and attributed her reserve and thoughtful silence to a still perceptible—he thought—taint of convention and prudery regarding her marriage contract.

Jessamy was troubled. The opening line and signature of John's letter were the same as in the first note he had ever written her, and in all subsequent epistles. He never varied these any more than a stroke of his penmanship. Then that line in the postscript stirred her again in the old way, hinted of the man she had so loved. Why did he write it? What did he mean by it?

After a day of troubling, during which Hutton was a miracle of tender, unobtrusive solicitude, wholly a friend and nothing of a wooer, she asked him what he thought of it. Could he

analyze, explain it? He could and did; and Jessamy burned the letter.

As it disappeared in the flames, she felt something of herself go with it; but so far from manifesting Hutton's conception of her as a woman who should love him and sorrow mightily therefore, she felt sure that she would never love, or sorrow, again. All that was left was ashes, dregs, dust, Dead Sea fruit. In other words the reality was not; remained only the game of emotions, the game John Peet had played for the rewards he valued when she was new to him, and he had not yet tired of possession.

Hutton noted the change in her, at once. The soft brilliance that characterized her eyes, her smile, her wit, herself in fact, had hardened to a glitter. To Wheeler this spelled resolution to claim her freedom secretly if not openly—and conventional ethics dispelled. He rejoiced in hope. He had thought of nothing for a week but this woman and how to win her. He had begun the siege with lazy certainty, but she had not capitulated.

Despite all the fires and forces within her, she remained to him chaste and aloof as the moon. He had thought her ignorant of her nature; he found she was not. She had a magnitude of temperament, but she controlled it; it did not control her. She had no vanity; or, if she had, she did not mistake it for higher emotions and thus leave an unguarded door through which sensuous suggestions might enter and betray the citadel from within.

Most baffling of all, she was a silent woman; he never knew whether she would speak the revealing word, the answer to his probing, or not. She had a way of looking long and meditatively at him after an intimate question or suggestion, plainly thinking, analyzing, concluding, but what? He seldom knew. He had to thank a large previous experience for the little he understood of Jessamy.

But his zest for the game was keen. She had become an obsession, because of the novel fear that he might never win her at all. There was one way to

reach her, one note to which that strangely self-concealed nature must respond, one thrust—if he but knew it—that would end this duel.

He watched her, he studied her, his eyes never left her face when he was with her, his thought never left her at all; yet he got no hint of the "open sesame."

One day the revelation came suddenly and unexpectedly; it was the day of John's return.

Hutton had concluded that there must still be some hidden compunctions concerning John to be removed; so he renewed the attack, that morning, from this particular standpoint.

"Why you ever married John is, and forever will be, a mystery to me," he began. "You have not one instinct in common. He is a modern, machine-made clod, utterly lacking in sensibilities. He hasn't even the instinct of a wild animal. He's just a human derrick heaving blocks of concrete one on top of the other. And that well-made, vigorous body of his means just about as much as the body of a well-fed steer. And you—you—are clinging to that because it gave you a wedding ring!"

"Oh, no, not at all. That doesn't mean anything to me—it never did. It never did and never could make marriage to me."

"Yet it was the only thing that did join you. There was never any spiritual union there." He laughed. "Spiritual union! Ye gods! Between a human derrick and—Mona Lisa. That is what you are! Now I have placed you! Solved you by finding you that forever unsolvable woman! The soul of a sphinx you have, Jessamy, with a face of old Italy.

"Sweet Jessamy—oh, the warm southern fragrance of you! This is not your land! These are not your people! Neither are they mine. No! They are John Peet's! We—you and I—my sun-kissed passion flower that will not weep—we are of golden Florence, where, in an ancient day, you walked pearl-crowned and trod on velvet; and I followed, kissing the prints where your feet had been. There, in the even-

ings on the loggia, I knelt at your side and sang you plaintive love songs, till, gazing on you, the beauty of your face drove all memoried words from my lips, and I could only cry: 'I love you—Jessamy—I love you!'"

His voice broke with a sob, and he reached his arms passionately to clasp her.

A slow, daring, insolent smile crossed her face as she sat looking at him unmoved. A spasm of rage seized Hutton.

"By Heaven, you should have another sort of a wooing! I'm brute enough to use force, if you make me. Do you think the primitive nature in a man like me is to be played with? It will rise up some day and teach you the lesson of your life."

She laughed, but the laugh trembled, and she caught her breath.

"Primitive nature—you? You use force? Why, if I really believed that—you—you—wouldn't have to. If there is such a man in the world I belong to him."

"Then you are mine!" Hutton cried. "For I am that man. Do you think a man's soul is cut in the fashion of his clothes? Or that the blood in his veins is not as red as that which courses through the veins of a lion? Other times, other manners! My instincts are as primitive as the cave man's, who wooed his mate with a club and dragged her to his lair. I would take by force the woman who called to me, but it is not the method of our time.

"If she were untrue, my instinct would be to kill the faithless woman, but it is not the method of our time. Utility governs our age. And utility dictates the divorce court. I would take you by force from your husband, fight for you—if he resisted—and kill him. But what says utility? The quiet divorce, or the quiet love affair; or in a case where the husband is as indifferent as John, and the lovers as courageous and emancipated as we, utility directs the perfect triangle without letting the vulgar public into the secret, with its gross innuendoes.

"We go to John, hand in hand, and

tell him we have found ourselves in each other's love; but there is to be no scandal, no open breaks to hurt his business, which he cares so much for. No, we protect him even there! It is the loving, unselfish way. Nothing is changed openly. We go on living as we have been. Only John and I have changed places. That is utility's method. I am at heart a savage, but utility governs me!"

"Then you will not do, my dear Wheeler," she answered coldly. "I want a man who shall be governed by that which he *is*. I've had my fill of shams."

Wheeler's face expressed a poignant agony. He spoke huskily.

"Then you will not go with me, hand in hand, to John Peet and ask your release? Will you continue to live on with him now that all feeling is dead between you? No, no, Jessamy, your soul is too fine to mix with his clay. And 'tis I who have emancipated you—! You can never forget that."

"I'm grateful to you for opening my eyes to several things, but I do not love you in the least."

"So be it," he cried. "At least you love no one else. You are without heart, it seems—the woman who cannot love. For such women kingdoms are lost! It's a small thing, I suppose, if I lose my soul! You love no one. But I have freed you and I worship you. To me you owe something then—to John, nothing. Will you *pay* your debt?"

She looked at him in silence for a few seconds, calmly deliberating. Then she said:

"John is very prompt about paying bills of all sorts. He would be angry if I left the grocer or the butcher unpaid. I shall tell him what you have done for me, and that you want payment for services rendered, and see if he will insist on squaring the account."

"Jessamy! You will tell him! Oh, glorious Heaven! You *do* love me. You desire to be mine even as I desire you—"

"No," said Jessamy, with an inde-

scribable expression of eye and lip, "but I do desire to tell John Peet."

"Let me kiss you once," he pleaded. "I have hungered so long."

"No. I agree with what John said of Mrs. Willett, and I shall tell my husband that I am going to follow my conscience, before I set out on the way. John has always been square with me that way, so I'll be square with him."

"How do you know he has been square?" Hutton smiled as he asked the question. "How you unconsciously insist on investing John Peet with your own ideals!"

Jessamy deliberated.

"I don't know that he *hasn't* been," she said. "Besides, I would not kiss John until it is decided which of you is to own me; so why should I kiss you?"

Hutton laughed.

"Oh, Jessamy, how little you know yourself! You think yourself a primitive woman; yet you invariably act by reason, never by instinct. Would a hot-blooded, elemental creature reason whether to kiss or not to kiss?"

"I don't mean to offend you, Wheeler, but—it really *was* instinct not to kiss you."

There was a sound of a freely operated auto horn in the street below. Jessamy went to the window and looked out.

"Isn't it wonderful?" she said. "Just as it was on that other day, a week ago, when you had opened my eyes—there's John driving up again, as if nothing had happened!"

She turned back to the window.

"Nothing *has* happened," Hutton mumbled to himself.

"Oh, there you are, Jess! Hullo, girl," said John cheerily, striding into the room, his greatcoat flying open. He tossed his cap on the piano and reached for his wife. "Did things up in great shape in New York. Get my letter? Foolish question. Course you did. I've got one of 'em now. Here! What are you shaking hands for? Aren't you going to kiss me? Wheeler doesn't mind. How're ye, Wheeler? Not shy, are you?"

"I have something very important to say to you, John," Jessamy began, withdrawing her hand.

"Well, you can kiss me first, can't you? We're still married, aren't we?"

"No. I can't kiss you first. And I don't know whether we are still married or not. That is what you must help me to decide—at once!"

"Jess! Have you gone crazy—or is this some sort of a joke?"

"It is not a joke, John."

"Then you've gone crazy," said John, with the finality of one who has solved a knotty problem. "What's the trouble? Did your mother wear on you?"

"No, John. There has been no trouble."

"What's the matter with her, Wheeler? Is she sick?"

"No, you poor, dear John. She is well; and very, very sane. And you must hear what she has to say, and be a man through it all."

Hutton felt a kindly pity for this big machine, whose brain muscles were about to be strained to breaking in a futile effort to grasp subtleties of feeling and delicacies of thought they were never designed to cognize.

There was a brief silence as John looked from one to the other. The gray of his eyes whitened by several degrees, but his large mouth and strong, white teeth smiled so widely, innocently, and pleasantly, that the expression of his eyes was not noticed by either of the introspectors. John was really, too obvious to tempt analysis.

He spoke in an easy tone.

"Since you're so very, very sane, and otherwise have your health, perhaps you'll kindly let me in on this. I'll try to follow Wheeler's advice, and hear it all without changing my sex."

"Perhaps I should retire," Wheeler suggested delicately.

"Certainly not," said Jessamy. "This concerns you as much as John."

"Better sit tight, Wheeler," John remarked pleasantly. "Now, Jess, let's try to decide if our union's still legal."

"It's legal, no doubt. But it is no longer—it never has been—mental, moral, or spiritual."

"You'll have to go on a bit, before I can get your point," John said quietly.

"I don't expect you to 'get' it. If you could understand it, it wouldn't be true. If you had ever understood my individuality, you'd understand me today—and no such conversation as this would ever take place."

"This is no conversation. This is a monologue, and it doesn't amuse me. What have I done, or left undone? And what's the next move? And who's going to make it? Try to make things clear to my infantile brain."

"Very well, I will!"

Jessamy rose and stood before her husband, and her black eyes looked very straight into his gray ones as she answered him.

"I married you by instinct, for no reason except that I *wanted* to marry you. You were big, and strong, with a brow, and a jaw, and straight-looking eyes, that I like. I thought you were a man; a *man* that I could adore, because you were strong enough physically and mentally to be feared and obeyed by the one woman you had chosen, and whose whole life you were big enough and tender enough to shadow over with your protection. That was the sort of man I thought you were. That is the man I loved—and married.

"I could have forgiven you, perhaps, for not being that man—nearly all women have to forgive their husbands for not being what they seemed to be, for not being real men. But you pretended to be that man for a little while so that I could love you more, and give you more. I placed you very high, John Peet—next to God; and you tore down my ideal of you and dragged it through the mire of passion. You were willing to buy my soul with a lie because it gave you my body. That is what you did to me in Florence, when I thought you were proving yourself all I had dreamed, and more; but you were only dragging me through the mire with you."

"Wait a moment, Jess," John said slowly. "Who told you all this? You never thought it out by yourself."

"How do you know what I have thought? *You've* never cared to ask. I haven't had as much interest for you as a block of concrete during the last five years. You'd rather lose me any day than lose a contract. I've thought and thought—of nothing else all this while. I couldn't understand how you could have been my man—my mate—and then become what you are to-day. But I've just learned that you've only stopped pretending, because I'm no longer a temptation. So I'm no longer your wife, because I won't live with a man I don't love; above all, with a man who has been a cheat in the most intimate things of life, and a liar in the most sacred things."

"Don't go too far, Jess, for your own sake."

She laughed. "What will you do? Beat me? Oh, no, John! You can never fool me again! You see, I *know* you. You're a fraud, a big bluff, and I've called you!"

The cords of John's massive hands swelled and knotted, but no one remarked them. Hutton shivered slightly at Jessamy's lapse into the sort of language John Peet could best understand; but, seeing the necessity, pardoned it.

"So I have done with you, John Peet; because I have done with shams. The man I am going to is the man to whom I owe everything, because he has opened my eyes."

"You mean?" John's voice was husky. "I mean Wheeler."

John's control broke. He turned on Hutton with a roar.

"You damned little cur! Call yourself my friend, and try and steal my wife—in my house."

Hutton recoiled farther back on the pillows of the divan. How like poor John to attack him on the ground of friendship, he thought. There John had sat perfectly unmoved, oblivious, through all his wife's psychic elucidation and scathing denunciation—Jessamy had been too scathing; there was really no occasion for heat in this matter—but now he awoke and shouted curses; because, forsooth, he had been

touched in a point of purely conventional morality!

"Why not?" cried Jessamy; and Wheeler recoiled still farther, as he saw, with amazement, that she, too, was shaken with an overpowering and increasing rage.

In fact, Mr. and Mrs. Peet were glaring at each other like panthers. Then suddenly Hutton understood Jessamy. She *was* primitive! Her fury was the fury of a tigress as she turns upon him who has attacked her mate! It was for him, Wheeler Hutton, that she faced John Peet's towering, burly rage, herself white-lipped and wide-nostriled with passion. The very elements at war, and he the centre of it, but untouched; he the very storm king. How glorious!

"Why *not*?" Jessamy cried again. "You left him here with me, indifferently enough. All these weeks you've had him here, and you've been glad to have him here because he could pay attention to me and save you the trouble. Now you say 'damn' because he is going to save you the trouble for the rest of your life!"

"You! You're a man like all the rest! You men! You love a dozen women, but you marry another—why? Because you can't get that one unless you do marry her! Once married, you study that woman for a few months, you cater to her tastes and feelings and needs—why? So that you can get the most out of her. You find she has an ideal, a dream, a big concept of a man—oh, not faultless, not perfect—only just a *man*, like men used to be, if the things they have been writing about themselves were ever true.

"And you pretend, for a while, to be like that dream she has. You're not honest enough—not man enough—to say 'I'm not what you think me. I'm just poor stuff; but I'm going to have you, just the same, just because I want you.' I could love you for that. A woman could love any man for his honesty alone—if he had it! You give us our freedom nobly, when you no longer care how we use it. You leave us and go and give all your time to

your business, just to be able to give us things, all for our sakes—so you say.

"Another lie. You go to your business because you love it best, because you're mad for money and power among men—yes—and your wife may go to the devil with the first agreeable man who happens along, and you don't know or care, so long as she doesn't annoy you by telling you about it, or force you to take some action that may hurt your business. What do you care for her loneliness, her heartaches, her temptations? The woman you married for passion, fooled, and tired of—why should you care what becomes of her, so long as she doesn't hurt your business?"

John was as pale as Jessamy, now, as he gripped her shoulder and whispered:

"Be quiet, you fool! Be quiet!"

But the touch of him only added fuel to the fire.

"I won't be quiet! You shall hear every word of it. I may be a fool, but I know what I want. I want a man who understands me—a *man!* I'm sick to death of the whole city tribe of half males, with their manicured finger nails, and their soft, puffy hands, and their bank books, and their food *à la poulette*, and their sordid business souls. I don't want his money, or his name, or anything else a man can give me, if he isn't a man.

"You American business men! You're the scoff of the world because of the way you treat your wives. You're neither men enough to be masters of your women, nor gentlemen enough to be true to them; because you don't know how to love. Love is the master who knows how to rule, and content, and hold a woman. You've never loved me—so I'm going. I'm sick of the freedom of indifference in your house, and I'm going.

"Now that I've told you, I *am* free. Wheeler has never yet kissed me—not once. I wouldn't let him till I had told you. I've been absolutely square. Now you've got to be square. He has shown us what a mistake our marriage was, and has disrupted it forever, set-

ting us both free. It was a service, and he demands payment; he demands me. But he is willing, for your sake, for the sake of your business, to have no scandal. He is willing we should all three live on here in the same way, except that you shall be my husband only in the eyes of the world."

"Yes, Jessamy and I—" Hutton began, rising from the divan and taking Jessamy's hand.

There was an unhuman sound, something between an ugly laugh and a roar, and the huge body of John Peet hurled through the air upon the two. He tore them apart with such violence that Jessamy fell upon the end of the divan. Hutton he threw across the room like a sofa cushion, where he fell, under the grand piano, cracking his wrist.

And John cursed in language that cannot be repeated, as he looked at the two prone ones. Hutton lay still, stupefied by this utterly unforeseen development. Jessamy raised herself on her elbow and regarded John Peet standing over her with clenched hands, and eyes deadly with insensate rage; and she smiled at him insolently, daringly, even as she had smiled at Wheeler Hutton's rage and emotions all the past week.

There was silence for a space, while they measured each other, this new John and sudden-born Jessamy. Then the fiend's light came into John's face and glittered there; and he smiled back at her—such a smile as drove her own away. He turned to where Hutton lay.

"Get up!" he ordered.

Hutton obeyed as quickly as his hurt wrist would permit, and leaned against the piano. John strode along the hall to his room. The two did not speak. They watched the door and waited. When John Peet returned, he had his revolver in his hand, and the same smile lit up his face in a way not good to see.

"I've got the right to blow your damned head off this minute, Hutton, just as I'd kill any snake that had tried to shoot its venom into me. I've got a right to beat that woman to death, if I want to, because she's mine, and I

can do it. But, since you've both been so damned square with me, breaking up my inharmonious family, and being willing to protect my business name by—— You want payment, do you, you dirty dog? You want my wife, eh? Well, I'll give her to you; and she'll go, too! You take her, and get out of here; now, quick!

"I'll give you just one hour's start—one hour by that clock. Then I'll follow you; and I'll track you down somewhere, some time, and when I do, I'll kill you both as sure as there's a sky above us!"

Jessamy gasped, then "John!" came with a little, broken cry; but she sat still. Hutton hastened to the door. John stopped him.

"Take that woman with you. If you try to go without her, I'll shoot you now. You wanted payment, and, by God, you'll take it!"

Hutton gave one terrified glance at the clock, whose minute hand seemed to him racing his life into the grave; then, in a frenzy of terror, he seized Jessamy's hand—she had not moved—and dragged her to the door.

"Go with your master and your mate when he calls you," John sneered at her, as Hutton pulled her past him.

She turned suddenly and flung her free arm round his neck, and burst out hysterically:

"John Peet, I love you."

John struck her, and she laughed.

"Come!" she cried to Hutton, and dashed out of the room.

John could hear her peals of wild laughter as she fled along the corridor and down the stairs. He heard her laugh again from the street below as she blew the auto horn vigorously and whirled the machine down the drive. She was sitting up straight, with her hand firmly on the steering gear, her hair and veil streaming in the wind, and her eyes and teeth flashing. She had seized her garden hat and cloak as she ran through the lower hall, and the hat, tied with ribbons, was hanging down her back, the bow under her chin. Hutton, pale and trembling, was huddled in the back seat of the machine,

almost extinguished under a hat of John's, which Jessamy had snatched by mistake and clapped on his head.

CHAPTER VI.

So Jessamy Peet took the man her husband had given her, and fled with him into unknown parts, even as her husband had commanded her; so Wheeler Hutton—who had done two uncongenial persons, great service in separating them, and in the manner approved by utility—received the payment he had demanded.

Upstairs, in the music room of a house on Sheridan Drive, John Peet sat with his gun in his hand and watched the clock on the mantel tick its way from three to four in the afternoon of a sun-flooded May day.

There was no word spoken between the two in the automobile as they fled down side streets and alleys, scattering chickens, dogs, and persons in their flight. Jessamy was driving furiously, and by instinct. Her one aim, while they were still in the city, was to get out of it without being arrested for speeding; so she hesitated not to leave a well-paved, well-policed thoroughfare for a muddy side street or an alley cluttered with débris.

The machine seemed to be infected by something of her spirit, or even of that more violent spirit which had driven her forth like a twentieth-century Wandering Jew to motor forever over creation at the rate of sixty miles an hour. For it darted away from under her hand like a mad thing, lurched, skidded, ran on two wheels, climbed over mounds of plaster, and palings, and tin cans, dived like a great, snorting whale through big puddles, scattering black waters over Hutton, whose slender body was flung upward, about, and out, and caught again, as if this were a game of diabolo, and he the ball. With one hand, he clutched the arm of the seat, with the other, he clung to the brim of John's hat, which covered him to the ears.

Jessamy's instinct guided her rightly to a West Side bridge. She had to slow

in crossing, and Hutton had an opportunity to speak to her.

"Where are you going? To a station?"

"No. By this time, John has phoned every station-master to watch out for us. He'd trace us easily. Don't imagine that he gave us an hour's start so that he could have that time to himself to weep! He's using every minute of it in scheming to catch up with us within a stone's throw from home and making us look like a pair of fools again—before he blows us into kingdom come!"

"Oh! Isn't he terrible?" moaned Hutton, shivering.

"Is that your latest analysis?" Jessamy asked, as they left the bridge and charged into Chicago's "Little Europe." On they flew, into and through Oak Park, out into the country road, westward bound. They stopped once before morning. That was at dusk, when Jessamy halted to light the lamps. Hutton's fear had abated enough for him to be able to feel resentful.

"You have no right to rush me all over the country like this, without letting me know where I'm being taken to! I *demand* to know where we are going."

"All right. When I find out, I'll tell you."

Brief silence.

"In the first town we come to, we must separate and go in opposite directions. That will make it harder for him to trace us."

Jessamy sprang into the machine again.

"Disabuse your mind of that idea, Wheeler. You were John's last gift to me, and I will not part with you! It's a matter of sentiment with me," she added, with one of her sudden bursts of wild laughter.

It sounded weird in the black loneliness of that country road. Hutton shivered. The woman was positively fierce, uncanny, savage! How had he ever thought her attractive? Or wasted on her his purest pearls of thought and his holiest emotions? How had he?

He lost his musings in a shriek. Jes-

samy had driven with her usual rapidity across a gully on something that was not a bridge. The car was plunging downward through space. That wonderful human car! It was fearless! It fell eight feet, landed on its legs, so to speak, unhurt; and, urged on by Jessamy, climbed the slanting bank of the other side of the gully. Reeling and gasping, it plowed its way up to the road again, shook itself, hesitated an instant, then rocked away, snorting, into the night.

For some time after that incident, Hutton's only conscious act was the mechanical, muscle-paralyzing clinging to the machine with one hand and John's hat with the other.

CHAPTER VII.

"God set His footprint down the world." So cries the poet at sight of the Grand Cañon. His is the bursting word of first view of that fierce outer valley where Jehovah walked in flame. It is a valley of red towers and sulphurous battlements, that speak of no puny human warfare, but of that earth-old struggle that shall have an end, for the Holy One sayeth: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh."

It was a strange, lurid day in July when two persons came among those fire-molded towers and climbed half-way to the summit of one. They came by a long, tortuous, and self-worn way—a way known, perhaps, to antelope, bear, or rattler, but unfrequented and unmarked by man.

The woman was the pathfinder. She led the way, half carrying, half dragging, a pole and a roll of tent cloth. After her halted and stumbled a man. He carried a hamper and a water can. They walked slowly, wearily, painfully, and in silence.

The woman made her way to a ledge of the tower, where an old pine tree, red and shriveled with heat, offered some faint hope of shelter. The man followed her, as a dog follows a tramp master—without reason or hope, simply follows. He watched her pitch the

small tent under the tree, but made no offer to help her, nor did she seem to expect help of him. Indeed, she seemed not to recognize his presence at all.

So it had been ever since the hour when John Peet drove them forth, one laughing May day, two months ago.

For two months he had journeyed with this woman through divers and hideous places on this insensate Western trip, yet not once had he so much as pressed his lips to her hand. If he had dared so far, he felt that he would have fastened his teeth in her flesh and torn it, so sullenly and savagely did he hate her.

His linen was soiled, and in rags, his cuffs were frayed, he had no collar, he had not had a bath for weeks, he had subsisted, hardly, on vile foods, he had tramped long, hot, dusty miles like a low hobo, and now his shoes were cut. He saw his toes coming through, and had a maniacal desire to cut them off, so that they, too, should not taunt him.

He collapsed on a hummock, and watched Jessamy's struggles with the tent. The heavy pole was unwieldy to her unaccustomed hands. It fell over, striking her shoulder, and knocking her against the tree. She let the pole fall to the ground and put her other hand quickly to her shoulder, and leaned back on the dust-covered trunk.

Hutton watched her from under John's big hat, now battered and torn, with a vindictive glee which only his worn physical condition kept him from expressing in kind. He hoped she had broken her shoulder. It was her right shoulder, and, oh, if it were only broken she could not use the gun that slung in the holster at her hip—in fact, he could take it from her easily, then—to prevent him from escaping by himself when he should be rested a little. His hopes mounted, she stood so long motionless, her two great black eyes in their black circles staring out of her pinched face down the far, sullen splendors of the cañon.

Yes, he was sure, now; this was the just vengeance that must inevitably come upon her for the brutal humiliations and hardships that she had

brought to him. It must be so! He no longer concealed his feeling. A malevolent grin spread across his unclean and unshaven face; he rose slowly.

At that moment, Jessamy stooped and lifted the pole—with her right hand—and went on with her work. Hutton dropped back on the hummock with a sickened snarl. As usual, she had noticed neither his presence nor his mood. He dug his heels into the clay in impotent wrath. As he did so, he saw his toes rise stiffly out of his shoe; and he cursed under his breath.

He reviewed, for the hundredth time, the circumstances and events of his sudden and most unexpected journey with Jessamy Peet. To leave his natural habitat of pretty parlors, presided over by pretty women, who understood the delicacies of a nature like his, and did not thrust him into conflict with their gross husbands, this had been the last thing in the world he had intended to do when he began the wooing of John Peet's wife. He had meant simply to teach this woman the joys of real experience; to show her the glorious rise and set of the sun of passion, and then, as Fate wills—as Fate always had willed before—to steal away in the black night of her sorrow that would follow.

He had pictured the next six months; the letters he would receive—pages upon pages of woe and yearning, of reiteration of the fond hours they had spent together, perhaps at first frenzied abuse of him for his desertion, varied by grief-wrung gratitude for all he had taught her ignorant soul—all of it welcome to him as incense to the nostrils of a god, or as live offerings to Moloch.

He had pictured himself answering those letters occasionally—from Florence, Cairo, or Venezuela—when lofty reproof should seem to him the most poignant response to a more imploringly intimate letter than usual; its beseeching intimacy caused, of course, by his own deliberately long silence. Next in his mental panorama had come a picture of her, weeping submissively over his letter, which proved to her again how trifling a thing she was in his life.

Thus it had ever been, in his romantic past. He had helped many a woman to "find herself," by overleaping, secretly, the conventional barriers into "spiritual freedom." He had led and tutored feminine timidity into great, soul-disrupting experiences; it was little wonder that the women he had freed had loved him, and less wonder that they had paid the price of sorrow for the instructive privilege.

He had taught the impetuous ones modesty of soul, through an exquisite refinement of secrecy. There had never been a scandal, a vulgar exposé. He was no crude *Don Juan*. He was a spiritual teacher and savior sent among women to bring them knowledge.

How in the name of all that was hideous had he stumbled blindly into this trap? He had unselfishly tried to free a woman who was too stupid, too earthen, to rise to the high, free ether with him. And, what was sadder still, out of his friendship for her husband he had endeavored to protect the latter and his "business," and now, because of his honesty and selflessness of purpose, he was hounded over the wilds of a God-forsaken country, in a burning July sun—like a malefactor—by a brute whose brain muscles were incapable of discerning him, but whose revolver would probably be more penetrative.

First there had been that terrible automobile trip, when he did not know where he was going, and felt that Jessamy did not care. She had made a mess of the escape from the start. They should have gone to some port, of course, and sailed by different vessels to different continents.

A child could have seen the wisdom of that; but not Jessamy. She had wheeled him, helpless—as if he were a drooling infant in a perambulator, and she a mad nursemaid—through roads, lanes, villages, and towns he had never heard of, half fed, sleepless, every nerve in his body shrieking from the long, swaying, reeling hours in the machine, but she would never tell him where she was taking him.

Then, one day, in a large, busy town where they had stopped for a night,

she had come to him in the hotel café, where he was trying to convince the waiter that he would pay the bill by and by, and told him that she had sold the machine, and bought railroad tickets.

"Thank God!" he had almost sobbed. "Where to? Galveston?"

Galveston seemed a wise choice, because John would probably not think of their sailing from there.

"No," Jessamy had answered. "The Grand Cañon."

"The Grand Cañon?" He had screamed the words at her. From that moment, he had been positive that she was really mad.

He protested vainly. The longer she argued, the more deadly she became in her determination; yes, deadly—for she had bought a revolver; it hung at her belt, loaded.

They had left the train, by her decision, at some jumping-off place, and she had bought the tent, and the hamper, which was stocked with hard crackers and canned beans.

At first, it had not been so hard on him, because she had hired a mule to pack the things, and an Indian to guide them. There had been a nerve-racking descent into this blazing infernal pit, then an insane banishment of mule and Indian, and a most mad wandering about, and camping, in its depths. He wondered if they were to starve to death when the basket should be empty, or live on such horrible fragments as they might coax from the loathsome-looking creatures in the village below them. What idiot first called Indians picturesque?

The indigestible contents of the hamper were bad enough. What a wretched, hideous fate! To be obliged to live with an armed madwoman in a small tent, on a dizzy ledge of a charred and broiling inferno—eating hard crackers and canned beans. No wonder he sometimes doubted his own identity! Could this be Wheeler Hutton? This the apostle of utility?

He had one hope still, although Jessamy's shoulder was not broken. In that miserable mud village whence they had mounted to their present perch that

morning, he had exchanged his watch for a pistol from one of the creatures, while Jessamy had her back turned asking questions of, or telling something to, one of the head men. She did not know that he had the gun. He did not mean her to know until he was prepared to show her who was the real master of the situation.

Why did she not speak to him? Not that he wanted to converse with her, not that there could be any communion between such alien souls; but it was not human to go on together in this sullen silence. They had not spoken for days.

He thought suddenly that he was like that tree by the tent, shriveled by the blast of the cañon; even so had infernal blasts and alien fires shriveled him. He was being helplessly destroyed by a foreign experience which his refined soul had never sought. How terrible!

Jessamy came out of the tent; and, at sight of her, Hutton's pathos was swallowed up again in the deep rage of hatred that gushed over him whenever he looked at her. Jessamy walked to the edge of the bluff and stood there—a slim, tall, bending reed of a woman, with the terrible July heat beating down upon her. There was no sky to-day; it was a thick, sunless heat, such as one's breath labors through like a sob.

John had once said: "I think that old cañon would understand us." Jessamy felt that it did understand her, at least; and when John came, it would understand him, and he would understand her, too, for one brief moment before they two went out, and only the old cañon was left, with its eternity and its infinite comprehension. To Jessamy, her soul was a reflex of the cañon—dull, resisting clay, shaped into burning wastes and ascension peaks of splendor by the fires of God.

She knew surely that John would come at last to this place; she waited for him with certainty. She thought constantly of their meeting, and prayed passionately that she might say her word before he did that which he had come to do. Her whole thought was centred in John and herself. Of Hutton she never thought. He had ceased

to be a living factor in the affair from the moment when John cast him under the piano.

As Hutton watched her—the madwoman, standing sentinel over the heat-crazed cañon—the end of all things came upon him. Perhaps his knowledge of the weapon buttoned up under his coat hastened his conviction that the limit of his endurance had been reached. He would be dog-at-heel to this silent, insane master no longer. He spoke—authoritatively:

"Jessamy!"

She half turned, glanced at him, then went back to her almost continuous gazing up and down the flaming valley.

"I will not endure your sulky silence any longer."

His voice had the nervous quiver of fatigue and threatening hysteria.

She remained fixed and aloof on her tower. Hutton took her continued silence, after what he had just said, as an additional insult. She would go too far, if she were not more careful! And then whatever happened would be her own fault. He began again:

"I demand to know why you have insisted on coming to this place, and when we are going to leave it."

She looked at him over her shoulder for a moment, then she answered quietly:

"I've come here because it has always been a dream of mine to be here alone with John Peet! It used to be a dream of his, too; and now it is coming true." Then she added: "And we shall never leave this place again," and turned her face cañonward once more.

"But you're not here with John Peet!" he screamed at her. "You're here with me—with me!"

She paid no attention. She was searching the distance under the shade of her hand. He focused his eyes on that hand. If, by chance, she were to drop it suddenly to her hip, would he not be justified in supposing—in fearing? An insane woman—of course she was insane, he could establish that; had she not just insisted that he was John Peet?—an insane woman who has shown signs of violence, such as buy-

ing a revolver and marching an unwilling man into the wilderness, suddenly drops her hand to her hip, where hangs her holster. Surely it would be regarded as "self-defense"? Especially if she had first shown irritation or unreasonable anger toward him.

He noticed how near she stood to the edge of the bluff. When—if—she fell, she must surely fall outward, over the cliff, down, down, out of his sight forever, into some crevasse or hole where none would ever come to discover her. It almost turned his own brain to think of it.

Nay, if he, too, were to go mad, would not the whole tragedy happen even more naturally—indeed inevitably? Altogether, considering the deadly heat and the terrible ordeals through which he had passed, what could be more probable? Any court in the land, whether judicial or social, must understand, and condone, and acquit.

He rose swiftly—too swiftly, for he struck his foot against a clod and hurt his bare toes, which circumstance served to send his rage mounting again. No wonder he was temporarily deranged! *Any* man with fine sensibilities would be!

As he stood up and looked over the giant chasm, he saw, in the opposite direction from Jessamy's view, a small party moving along by the river's edge. There rose in his breast a sudden mad hope to reach that party and implore to be taken to civilization again, and protected. He moved closer up behind her.

"I say, you're here with me, not John Peet!" he repeated vehemently. "And I have had enough of it! I'm going to—"

"You will wait here, just as I shall, till John Peet comes—" she began calmly.

"You crazy fool!" he spluttered, "John Peet will never come here!"

"He will come."

"Then what in hell's name are we doing here if—"

"We are waiting for John Peet."

"To come and kill us?"

Hutton's voice rose with every sen-

tence. He began to wriggle and twitch, proving to himself that he would soon be beyond control.

"I suppose so, and you'll stay and wait for him with me. I'll make you stay."

Her voice was low and toneless.

"I'm going, I tell you! Ha, ha, ha! Wait here for John Peet to murder me! Ha, ha! Not I! You've driven me mad—you've driven me to murder!" His voice rose with a shriek. "You—you—you!"

Jessamy turned on the instant that Hutton seized her, pushing her forward to the brink of the cliff, and thrusting the Indian's gun in between her shoulder blades. She slid round swiftly in his trembling grasp, and looked into his face. It was white with terror, hideous with a coward's fear of the treacherous murder he lusted to commit, quivering with a puny hatred and a feeble cunning; his shaking fingers felt frantically for the trigger.

"You—you—you've driven me to murder! I'm mad!" he shrieked again, and poked her wildly with the nose of the revolver.

Her calm, cool, contemptuous eyes infuriated him so that, with his rage and his terror, he sobbed spasmodically.

Jessamy twisted sharply and freed herself; her action flung the uncertain Hutton to the ground. The gun dropped from his nerveless hand. He lay in a heap, and wept hysterically. Jessamy stooped and picked up the revolver.

"Where did you get this?" she demanded.

"I—I—from an Indian—this morning—"

"You had no money. How did you pay for it?"

"My watch—it was only a cheap one—they lent it to me long ago—while they were putting a new spring in my own—I—what good was a watch—or—anything—to me here—in this hellish place?"

His voice rose hysterically again.

"As much use as a rusty old pistol which isn't even loaded, and probably wouldn't fire if it were."

She tossed it high over the brink. Hutton's blinking eyes saw it for an instant rise like a black bird, cutting through the thick, yellow air; then it dropped downward—as he had hoped to see *her* drop—into some undiscovered gully.

"I want to go away," he began again pitifully.

Jessamy's victory over him, to this last, last detail of her contemptuous tossing of the pistol over the cliff, had brought home to him more terribly his utter helplessness. He was hopelessly in the grip of this unfeminine, inhuman, terrifying woman.

"I want to go away," he repeated. "I don't want to stay here—it's horrid—it's hot—it's hateful!"

"You will stay here till John Peet comes. That is final. He told you to take me as payment—"

"Don't remind me of it," Hutton screamed, and writhed on the ground.

"For the service you claimed to have done us both," Jessamy went on calmly. "I knew then that you would never collect that payment if we traveled together for twenty years. But John could not have believed it, at that moment. All he understood was that his friend had been trying to seduce his wife, and his wife had listened, perhaps yielded—at least, she had contemplated yielding. He was just a male in his rage—and a cunning, cruel savage in his method of punishing us two."

"Oh, horrible, horrible!" Hutton moaned.

"But after the first few days, he must have begun to understand—after thinking and thinking it all over, day and night. Then he would know—somehow—where I had gone; because we are mates, John and I, though we had forgotten that. He knows; and he is coming, and I am waiting and watching for him. He *must* find us here together as we are, and know that the payment demanded, and which he ordered me to pay you—for separating John and me—has never been, *could* never be, paid, because there was never any such debt. Nothing could separate us. The width of the world may lie between us,

now; yet we are closer than when we first joined hands."

Hutton burst out, as a fresh fear struck him:

"Oh, that's it! You think he'll take you back! He'll only kill *me*—that's why you force me to stay—so that he'll have some one to kill!"

"John Peet will surely kill me, as he said—and himself. I know that. But I think he will not kill you to put you out of my world, because he will understand, the minute he sees you; he will know that you never lived."

Hutton was silent now. He began to pull himself together, and to be dimly aware that Jessamy had not even drawn her gun during his attack, a fact he had been too frightened to consider at the time. He got up on his feet weakly. He hoped to Heaven she was right in thinking that John Peet would not murder *him* when he found out that he and Jessamy were not lovers. Lovers! If only John would give him a chance to tell how he hated Jessamy Peet, he would know that the honor of his house had suffered nothing at the hands of Wheeler Hutton.

"I'm dead tired," he whimpered. "I—that's what made me lose my nerve—I didn't know what I was doing—I went mad—temporarily deranged."

She looked at him, and the faintest smile flickered across her wan face for an instant.

"When you tried to shoot me and throw me over the bluff at the same time? You *did* lose your nerve at the crucial moment, but you weren't mad; you only wanted to make yourself believe you were. It was just like everything else you've ever been or done—artificial. Just like your love-making, which is all a desire for the flesh, but calls it spirit, and urges a wife into a 'spiritual freedom' which only degrades her, and asks for a woman's highest and holiest faith so that you may turn it into a carnal weapon to destroy her. You want human sacrifice—which the one true God never permitted. It was always the false gods, the wooden idols, whose very existence depended on the ignorance of their wor-

shipers who had fashioned them—these were the only gods to whom human sacrifice was ever offered."

Hutton limped away to the tent.

"I'm sick—I'm very sick—and I'm going to sleep—if I can sleep in this terrible air."

The mouth of the tent fronted the cañon; as he went in he caught a glimpse of the three riders disappearing, with his last hope, in the heat mists which were thickening fast in the valley. He drooped, and crawled between the tent flaps.

Automatically Jessamy picked up John's dilapidated hat, and passed it into the tent after him.

CHAPTER VIII.

Jessamy had always been a deep, silent thinker; but never before had she had as much incentive to thinking as in the last two months. Under the sudden fierce ruling which had sent her forth from the house of the man she loved, in company with a man who was only a plague spot in her consciousness, she discerned cause and effect rightly, and began to glimpse the true law that had governed from the beginning, and which was still shaping events.

When, for any cause, she had first passed out of harmony with John Peet, doubting the greater ideal of him which she loved, she had opened the gates of Eden, to depart therefrom. It seemed natural to her now that Wheeler Hutton should have arrived when he did, and that both she and John should have welcomed him so gladly into their home; for he was certainly the embodiment of the fear, the artificiality, and the selfishness which were already manifest. John, with his strength, and his big, blind, right intention, had taken the building love out of their home to raise office blocks with, and left their individual life as man and wife at the mercy of the creative desire without the wherewithal to build.

She had fled from the barrenness to clubs, to seek the makings of a new haven there. What she had found had been a number of women—blowing

bubbles. Some of them were there because, like herself, they were heart and soul starved at home, and thought that mental indigestion from alien and ill-prepared foods was better than hunger. Many of them were willing victims of the mesmerism of egotism, and supported clubs because clubs alone could give them scope for their egotism.

Here Jessamy had overlaid the truth of her with artificiality. No wonder Hutton, who was artificiality's self, had come to add lie to lie! No wonder she had felt herself sundered forever from John Peet! For, though John's blind self-centredness had been the first error in their scale of woe, yet John Peet had no affinity with artificiality. He was real. How naturally had this real man sent artificiality and sickly pretense forth from his dwelling with deadly violence!

Jessamy knew now that she, too, had never had any mental unity with the sham that was Wheeler Hutton. The test of truth had stripped the sham of its pretense of truth. Even John Peet, big, and blind, and mad with jealous fury, could not look at Wheeler Hutton to-day and not know that his mate—Jessamy, so rightly surnamed Peet—had never been really touched, physically or spiritually, by this sham.

And, she thought, too, how natural that this malicious, lying thing which had tried to strangle her soul should later have tried to murder her body—and lied about the latter intent, as it had lied about the former.

Long before reason had reached this point, instinct had warned her to walk armed before Wheeler Hutton; there was no defined menace, but she felt him evil, seeing all the defeated carnality of the man turned to hatred. For a very definite reason, she had forbidden him to have a weapon; and had successfully prevented him from procuring one, she had thought. It was because she feared he would lurk behind shelter and shoot John Peet, since John could not well arrive without their perceiving his advance.

Whatever happened to Wheeler Hutton would not much matter. He was a

cipher. But she and John Peet should not die by any hand save John Peet's. She welcomed the thought of that death, because it would finish this grief, and there was a hope, perhaps, that it might make possible another union in which they could retrieve their errors. Destruction had had its way too far with their present lives not to decree the end, and also execute its decree. The machinery that had been set in motion was too vast and powerful to be stopped by a human cry.

The heat increased as the yellow mists settled over and into the cañon. They came, apparently from nowhere, like veils on veils dropped from the invisible sky to the receding earth, hiding the varied, colorful life of this mortally silent and immortally vocal immensity, dulling all its strange splendors to a somber menace. A wind rose somewhere in the outer deeps, and breathed through that great mouth like the dying gasp of a gladiator—a blasting, searing breath, as of one who has already drunk at the burning lake; and the dull yellow mists wrapped still closer.

Jessamy sank down on the bluff as if she could no longer stand under the ominous weight of oppression without and within. She seemed like some small bird, broken-winged, prone, and helpless on the earth before the withering terrors of a coming storm—the one small, feebly living thing flung midway between a lost heaven and a departed world. Indeed the only sign of life was in the narrowed, burning black eyes which searched downward along the trail she had made that morning, and on into the unsearchable opacity.

Presently a quiver shook her, and her breath stopped, then came in a silent, rending sob. She had seen a man emerge from the growing shadows below, and begin the ascent to where he could doubtless espy the tent on the cliff's edge.

Jessamy crawled backward until out of possible range of view, then rose and ran swiftly to the tent. She wormed herself in under the back drop, and pored close over Hutton. He was

unconscious—in the dead sleep of utter exhaustion.

She slipped away out again, and crossed to the other side of the little plateau where another spur of the cliff jutted brokenly higher and wider. Here she had a clear view of John Peet as he crawled up the face of the bluff, though she herself was hidden from him by the red and tawny towers that rose like steeples and headstones about her.

John carried his gun in his hand. As he gained the brow of the bluff and stood erect, Jessamy could see that the white brand of that sudden violence was still on his face. The dust had settled on his clothes and grayed his hair; it was thick about and upon him, and added its pallor to the pallor of his set face and white-gleaming eyes.

Again the silent sob, that came from the pang and the relief of an anguished apprehension fulfilled, shook Jessamy's slender body, as she looked on John Peet and saw the wreckage of his soul; and she knew that, whereas he had pronounced her sentence in a sudden vengeful rage, he had come to execute it, because love of her had risen and overwhelmed him, and he could not live, loving her, nor let her live.

It was fitting that they had come together thus, in the mists; unseen of earth or sky, and unconscious of all but their lie-destroyed love—and each other—coming to a final end in the crowding storm shadows.

John moved quickly to the tent, holding his gun in front of him, his finger on the trigger. He waited an instant, then noiselessly and rapidly opened the tent flaps. He did not enter, and there was no shot. He dropped the flaps back, and stood as one who is weary and has lost interest, or as a man who has made a long, tiring journey for nothing.

Then he turned, and saw Jessamy's white face and sunken eyes staring at him over a boulder. Almost automatically, he began to aim, responsive to the only thought he had had in mind ever since he took revolver in hand to follow her.

"Don't shoot yet, John!" The words tore from her sharply.

"Why not? Because I caught you both napping? That's what I figured on doing."

"I watched you come all the way up the hill. I've had you covered for five minutes, and I didn't shoot."

John studied her face a moment.

"Why not?" he said. "If you think your generosity in sparing my life is going to stop me in doing what I came here to do, you're wrong."

"That wasn't the reason. I didn't shoot because there is something that must be said—before we go out."

"We? You mean you and—"

"I mean you and I, John."

He laughed an ugly laugh.

"I'm not going out, Jess. You and—Hutton—are the romantic lovers. I don't lay claim to any romance."

She did not answer, but looked at him. There was a brief silence. Then John put his gun in his pocket.

"You can come out, and we'll talk," he said.

She came round the boulder which had shielded her, putting her revolver in her holster as she walked toward him.

"Why didn't you use that when you saw me coming? That's what you got it for, isn't it? To protect yourself?" he asked.

"Not from you."

"From Hutton?" he sneered. "I shouldn't have thought he was so strenuous as all that. Hasn't he got a gun, too?"

"No."

"Why not? Can't he shoot? Or has utility got a better method?" He sneered again savagely.

"He had a gun this morning; but I took it away from him—after he had tried to kill me."

"Why?"

"Because I wouldn't let him go. He has hated me, and wanted to leave me ever since the moment we left the house because I made something real happen to him. He doesn't like real experiences."

John laughed his ugly laugh again.

"A man or a dog can't help his instincts. He does the thing that's in him to do. Why didn't you pick a man to go with?" he said.

Jessamy's peaked face twitched slightly. With a forlornly sardonic humor, she answered:

"Because you didn't send me with one."

"Why didn't you let him go, if he wanted to? Love him so much?" Then the sneer broke. "Curse you!" he said, shaking.

"John—I never loved him."

"That only makes it worse—makes you worse. You let him lie round you, like a puppy, talking of things you'd no right to listen to from any man but me."

"You haven't said a word of love to me in months—years—"

"I'm your husband; you knew I loved you. You know I never looked at any woman but you."

"That wasn't enough. You were so busy building outside our home you never saw that you were pulling down our whole life. And now it is all in ruins—your big business has fallen down, too, along with our life. When love falls, nothing can stand, because love is the only builder."

"You knew I loved you," he repeated. "And you were my wife—my wife? When did I ever wrong you?"

"When you stopped being my lover. I only lived for your love, for you. But you were too selfish, too sunk in yourself, to care about me—what I felt or suffered, or hoped, or lost. You loved me just as something to use for your own comfort and pleasure; you didn't care anything about *me*, and my happiness."

"My God, Jess! I know where I was wrong! Maybe I was selfish—and all you accuse me of, maybe I was. But did that make it right for you to let a man— You belonged to me."

"You know the honor of your home and—"

"Honor! Damn honor! Don't talk that book stuff to me! It's you—you, my woman, that belongs to me! Do you think I've hunted you down be-

cause of any book notions about honor?" He laughed savagely. "It's because you're mine—mine—and you let another man make love to you, and look you over, and size up how to get you."

A rush of wind and a clap of thunder drowned his last words. The hurricane whirled by in clouds under the low sky, which was blackening, as if for twilight, though it must have been only mid-afternoon.

"I was no longer yours. You lost me when you changed."

He heard part of her sentence over the blare of the wind and the quickly following roar of the skies. A flash of lightning revealed her to him, her white face thrown back defiantly, her long hair whirling in the wind which seemed to rise up from the ground in great, black eddies.

"I never lost you. You were mine. Didn't I teach you that once, in Florence?"

She cried out at that.

"Yes, John Peet. That was the beginning and the end. That is why I listened to another man when I came to know that on that night"—the storm rolled and beat about them again, and she rushed close to him to shout her words so that he might hear—"that night you broke me, for a jest. For sport!"

And John Peet roared back at her through the tempest: "You were mine, to break as I chose, for sport or for nothing! If I could do it, I had the right to. I had the right because I loved you with every drop of blood in me!"

She heard him because he had seized her arm and held her against him. He went on, letting the fury of his soul loose now to beat upon hers with a more terrible storming than wind and lightning know.

"I've loved you—you belonged to me like my hand or my heart! What struck you, hit me. What took you away, tore me and—crippled me. You've done for us both. I shouldn't take two shots, Jess, because it's one death. I want it over with. I can't bear to look

at you—your eyes—I want them shut, so I can't see them—I want you dead!"

Why or how she wrenched herself free and stumbled backward toward the tent, Jessamy never knew. She steadied herself a dozen paces from him, and saw him take his gun from his pocket. Then there was a roar in her ears as the lightning flared again.

She saw John throw his gun and rush toward her, and heard him call her name wildly. He seized her in his arms and flung her—she felt all the weight of his body in the impetus, and wondered vaguely if he had thrown them both over the bluff.

Then she felt the earth under her, and John above her, and was dimly conscious that the world itself was shaking, and that a sound like the roll of a thousand drums went past her as she lay on the cliff, broken under the power of John Peet.

Presently she moved her hand, and felt something loose and moving in the wind. She grasped it, and felt it prick her flesh. It was the bough of a tree. How did it get there? She questioned. Then she understood. The lightning must have struck the pine by the tent—and John? John, who a moment before was going to shoot her, according to the vengeance he had sworn, had been taken unaware by this sudden attack of the tempest's, and, because he had had no time to think, instinct only had acted; and so he had saved, at the risk of his own life, the woman he had come to kill.

How long or how short the time while she lay there and the truth came to her, she had no idea; indeed time and all things finite seemed to have ended, gone out with the storm, which was dying in a spill of rain as suddenly as it had risen. The reign of violence was over; and a strange peace welled up in her soul.

"You are not hurt, dear?" John was speaking in her ear.

"No. And you?"

"Nothing much. Lie still, while I try to get you out of this."

Jessamy did not know that it was

with a terribly bruised body and a badly strained shoulder that John Peet liberated them both from the boughs of the fallen tree. She had escaped the killing weight of the trunk by a miracle only—the miracle of love suddenly freed from a false dominance that had perverted it to evil, and restored to itself by the normal instinct of a true man. The truth of a man had spontaneously arisen and had shattered all the vast and intricate machinery of destruction.

They stood on their feet and looked at each other—as they had looked on a certain eve in Florence; and then she went into his arms and was folded there silently.

The wind had fallen, the storm had passed, and the yellow thunder clouds were gone, and earth and sky had returned again in their fullness, and the damp breathing air was kindly in its warmth; and though the sun's appearing lessened not the heat of July, it brought back the glowing glories of the cañon, which shone as jewels in a mighty crown, such as Jehovah might set upon Earth's brow when the strife between His Spirit and her flesh is ended, as His word prophesieth.

So they two stood, all in all to each other, forgetting the man who had

seemed to part them, and all that had followed on his coming.

But presently the woman remembered. They turned toward the tent, and stood motionless many minutes. The bolt and the blasts which had felled the tree, thus giving them back to each other, had loosened the boulders and earth about the tree and swept down over the face of the cliff into the depths below, taking tent and sleeper with them.

They stood erect on the shining bluff, but nothing remained of that which had parted them. Nature, like the great elemental soul strife of men, had swept into nothingness only what could not survive; for her breath, even as the primitive forces of man, blisters to ashes the pretenses of earth, but carves the giant granite out from its fellows and fixes it, a monarch on the mountainside, till mountains shall be no more.

They spoke no word of Wheeler Hutton; but, holding closely to each other, watched the sun which had risen on the storm only to set, flooding heaven with crimson, and spilling the red wine of infinite inspiration over the world. And their upturned faces were lit with a new light from the clear shining in the Valley of Vision.



HAPPINESS

HAPPINESS?—here and gone!
Sweet that is sure to cloy.
Brown seed, and mold; anon,
A wonder without alloy—

A poppy bloom, sprung whence murk
Mothers its mystic brand;
Spared through the wind's wild work
To die at some friend's rough hand!

Dying, it fades from sight;
Fear not!—it shall come again—
That glow through the veil of Night,
That bloom that is born of pain!

ARTHUR POWELL.



The Road to Jericho

— BY —

MARGARETTA TUTTLE —



A PHYSICIAN whose hospital service includes weekly operations, whose office hours are occupied with a half hundred patients a day, and whose practice is built on hard-won success in difficult nervous cases, has no time for the nursing of a grudge.

When, therefore, Carleton Thorne found that Mrs. Carson had prevented both the release of her husband and the expression of outside opinion on his sanity, he gave a few minutes' consideration to her cleverness, that his brother, the rector, had called abnormal, without any great discomfiture over being outwitted by it. It was not until a week later that he learned that the rector had had an appreciable share in this cleverness, and to this fact he gave more than a few minutes' consideration.

A clever woman adds interest to any situation, but a clever beauty is a power. When a woman is lovely in the appealing way that for centuries has been effective with men; when she barbs her loveliness with understanding; when she holds in lavish hands generations of hoarded wealth, one expects doors to swing wide for her and men to do her service. But when one suddenly finds among these men one's own brother—a man to whose profession the slightest breath of scandal would be a grave misfortune—it is apt to take more than a few minutes' consideration for the mere gauging of possibilities.

The doctor opened the door of his brother's study at the front of the par-

ish house, and then he laughed. For the rector was staring at the pile of women's letters that lay on his desk with a look that sought the assistance of the better part of valor.

"It was announced in some foolish paper," said Wrexford Thorne, "that my congregation was about to allow me a month's vacation. These are invitations."

"It would not happen if you had a wife," said the doctor. "Why don't you get one?"

"Get one yourself. A doctor needs a wife worse than a rector."

"Some day, I shall. But when a man reaches thirty-five he is either ready to marry any attractive woman because domesticity begins to appeal to him, or else he takes his requirements into such serious account that mating is not easy. Have you met many women you would like to spend your life with?"

"If you met more than two or three, I should think you might get confused," said the rector. "Have you met one?"

The doctor looked out of the window at an automobile drawing up to the curb behind his own.

"I have met but one girl I really wanted to see as often—as often as she would let me," he said. "But she had the germ of infinite variety in her. It promised to develop into a gift as she grew older. Most of the women I meet are pretty much alike, save those who are making their own living."

"And the one girl?" asked the rector. "Where is she?"

"I have no idea. I met her the sum-

mer I was loafing about the Italian lakes, after my two years in Germany studying brain surgery. She was with her father, who was trying to recover from overwork, and had nervous symptoms I should like to have studied. You know the rapid acquaintance a summer resort facilitates. She agreed to let me know when she returned to America—and that was all. I did not hear from her again. Rex, do you mind telling me how you happened to help Mrs. Carson in this little matter of the release of her husband—in which you knew I was on the other side?"

"Yes, I do mind—except to tell you that I thought she was right, and you were wrong."

"It was almost brilliant of her to pick out my own brother to prevail against me. I should like to ask her about it but for the fact that, at the end of our unexpected ride, after I had refused to take her views or have confidence in her, there was nothing to lead me to suppose that she would welcome speech with me."

The rector gathered up the pile of women's letters with a curious little look at the back of his brother's head as the doctor stood at the window.

"Mrs. Carson was trying to get you on the phone this morning. She even telephoned here. It is some professional matter she wants you to handle."

The doctor wheeled about.

"What!" he said.

The rector answered a knock at the hall door.

"There is no use," he said, "in asking a man who says he understands women to explain them."

"The man who says he understands this particular woman—" began the doctor, and then both men were smitten into silence. For in the doorway stood a slim and vital figure, wrapped in a long silken motor coat of Delft blue.

"It looks," said Nadine Carson, "as if I had pursued you. But they told me at your office, Doctor Thorne, that you were here, and, as I am leaving in an hour for Long Island, I was anxious to talk with you first. May I come in and speak to you here?"

Under the corn flowers of her blue hat, her long eyes, the bluer for the color about them, rested on the doctor with no apparent memory of their last interview. Again the contradiction of her face, with its passionate promise, and its cool denial of fulfillment, struck the doctor, demanding his curious attention. Excellently poised as he knew his brother to be, he found himself wondering if he could escape the response invoked by those long, quiet eyes, with their promise of a chance awakening. The vague possibilities, whose consideration had driven him to his brother's study half an hour ago, assumed more definite form.

The rector was the first one to recover his voice.

"Will you sit down, Mrs. Carson?" he said.

"Thank you. I have come, of course, for help. I am on the road to Jericho, and a little farther on there lies a man who has fallen among modern thieves of usefulness. It is for him that I need your help. Perhaps, after all these years, the Priest and the Levite may yet be good Samaritans."

It took the doctor a few seconds to envisage Mrs. Carson in the rôle of good Samaritan, and he was silent through sheer astonishment. Then he said:

"I hope we can help you. That is Rex's especial business, and sometimes it is mine."

"You both know," she said, "that I have had the guardian of my husband's estate removed. In searching for a man to take his place, I hoped to find some especial qualities that are not easy to find together. I wanted maturity, and executive ability, and honesty. And I wanted a man—a man—to whom the fact that I was a woman would make no difference. I have no relatives of my own, and the Carson family is equally lacking. But there was one man who seemed especially fitted for this work—or who would be so fitted if he were in better health. He is not a blood relation of the Carsons, but a connection. Failing other heirs, there is even a chance that the Carson money

might go to him, and his daughter. There are but the two of them. But he has always hated Colin Carson—and"—she hesitated—"he has no respect for a woman who could have married him.

"But because he was an able man, and a Carson connection, perhaps because of his very honesty in the matter of his dislike of everything that had anything to do with Colin Carson, even to his refusal to touch any of his money, I have kept a kind of watch on him, especially since he left the bench."

Carleton Thorne suddenly leaned forward in his chair.

"Several years ago," Mrs. Carson continued, in her low voice, "he was in a frightful wreck. I believe he was only slightly injured, but the after sights of mutilation and death got on his nerves, and he never recovered his strength. He finally gave up his office, and went abroad for a while with his daughter, but he had not accumulated much money, and they came home after a little while, and for the last year they have been living at a little place they have on Long Island. His name is Wallace."

"I know him," said Carleton Thorne. "If it is the Judge Wallace who—has a daughter—Amy."

Mrs. Carson seemed so little surprised that for a moment the doctor wondered if she had known of his having met Judge Wallace and his daughter abroad.

"Yes," she said simply. "His daughter's name is Amy, and your knowing them will make matters easier should you decide to interest yourself in them.

"When I began to think of him as especially fitted for the position I had to offer, I hoped he would feel that he could accept some of the Carson money if he earned it, and so I went to see him. He is living in a little five-roomed cottage they have near Port Madison, and about an hour's run from my own place at Belle Terre. Miss Amy has been teaching a country school that she might be with her father and keep him in the country. It is—tragic. You both know the man. He was a brilliant ju-

rיסט. His daughter is—charming. I give you but the meager facts, but perhaps you, who meet such facts every day, and look behind them, can see what it means to this man to give up his work and his life, and to see his daughter bear the burden of his support.

"It has so far softened him that he gave me as his only reason for the refusal of my offer that he was utterly unable to do continuous work. He even gave me, in answer to my inquiry, a sentence or two about his illness. Constant headache and hours of faintness. It was this, he said, that made him give up his office. Yet when I asked him what his physician said, I discovered that since his return from Italy he has had no doctor. He gave as his reason his belief that there was small hope for him—but I think, perhaps, it is sheer poverty, joined to his abnormal pride. It is, of course, only my own idea, but it seemed to me that he was waiting to die, and—hoping, for his daughter's sake, that it would not take him too long.

"I cannot, perhaps, make you feel as I did about it—that it was a great pity and a great waste, but I came away determined that it should not be—determined all the more because he would accept nothing from me that I would not be denied in this. I think I should never escape the conviction that I could have prevented it—if the man should die, and his daughter suffered—that I might have been more persuasive, that I might have put it differently. I have thought and thought what I could do. You see, but for me, this money, or some of it, would be at their disposal; therefore, any money expended on him is only right—and I have so much! It is not often that I am refused."

Carleton Thorne spoke. "This determination on his part; this assertive will power, does not look neurasthenic. Men suffering from exhausted nerves usually suffer, at the same time, from exhausted will power. They are vacillating and without self-control."

Mrs. Carson gave him the deep, clear

look that no man, seeing, would ever after believe her to be a woman immersed in mere events.

"This is what I want—and why I have come to you for it. I want a doctor familiar with all the late achievements in the rehabilitation of wasted nervous vitality. But I want him to have other resources in case this should not prove a case of nerve exhaustion, but of some overlooked matter. You are both surgeon and physician. I want also a doctor who will make friends with a cultured and able man; who will persuade him to let himself be helped—for any reason—for his daughter's sake—for the doctor's pride of achievement—it does not matter. And in your case there is just that little touch of fate—if one believes in fate—the fact that you already know them."

"The little touch of fate," said the doctor gravely, "amounts to this: I would rather help these two people than do anything else that I can think of."

"It lends me superstition," said Mrs. Carson, "that you are the man needed, and can, therefore, hope for success. You will undertake it, then?"

"I shall be glad to try it. And I will do my best."

"Thank you," she said simply. "About a half mile from Judge Wallace's there is an old-fashioned farmhouse, presided over by a delightful spinster of fifty, whom I know—a Miss Azalea Jossus. There's a name for you. She has a Virginian colored cook. She will take you in. There are horses, and there is room for your automobile. If you motor to and from town, you will be able to attend your office hours and your necessary outside work, I should think. It is conceivable that you should be quietly spending a semivacation on Long Island. I shall be at Belle Terre, but an hour away, and you can reach me any time by telephone."

"I can be ready to go in three days," said the doctor.

"I will send you the address and the route for your motor. The rest I shall leave to you, unless I can help, in which case, I shall be glad to do whatever I can. Good-by, and again—thank you."

The door closed behind her. The two men looked at each other silently. A faint fragrance lingered in the room. Carleton Thorne took out a cigar and lit it.

"You had better spend part of your vacation with me, Rex," he said.

As Wrexford Thorne took the coast road with Bucephalus, he let his mind dwell on the tragedy that he and his brother had come to Miss Jossus' farm to look into. They had been there now for a fortnight.

It sounded a simple thing, to say that ill health had driven a brilliant man into exile in the country, but behind it lay failure, and pain, and that poverty that may not confess itself, and is but the harder to bear.

Even Miss Jossus, his critical hostess, had acknowledged the courage of the fight that the girl had made earning their bread; hurrying home from her little country school to order and maintain her small household in comfort and cleanliness, and with it all finding time to walk about the country with her father, sometimes talking with him, sometimes hunting mushrooms, at all times companioning him. It would be no wonder if such a girl proved attractive to his brother.

The horse turned the curve of the road and shied suddenly, and Thorne, reining him in, looked for the cause. A four-rail fence divided the road from an apple orchard, whose trees were bending under unripened fruit.

On the third rail of the fence, holding a post by one hand, and, with one foot poised on the top rail, stood a girl, possibly in her twenties, but whose slightness gave her an added youthfulness. Under her arm, she carried a garden hat that had been full of apples. The start that the spectacle of the plunging horse had given her just as she was climbing the fence, had upset the hat, and two dozen green apples rolled into the road.

In an instant, Thorne was off his horse, had thrown his bridle over a fence post, and taken his cap from his head.

"Did my horse frighten you? I am sorry. May I pick up the apples?"

"I think," she said, with the faintest accentuation of color, "that I frightened the horse." Then she added, a little phrase that lifted the apology into a conversation. "And no wonder," she said.

She put the other foot over the fence rail, and, disregarding the hand Thorne involuntarily held out to assist her, she reached the ground with a flash of slim ankle, and a swift grace that accented the impression of youth she gave. As Thorne knelt to pick up the apples, the girl watched him curiously.

"You will make yourself sick eating these," said Thorne, as he laid them in her hat.

He looked up in time to catch a quickly suppressed flicker of mirth on the girl's face.

"Perhaps I am not going to eat them this way. One can stew apples."

"Oh!" said Thorne, still looking at her.

A girl who gathers apples from the roadside to stew them is different from one who takes an apple or two to eat while passing a tempting tree.

Nut-brown and scarlet, her eyes and lips lent her face a piquancy borne out by provocative chin and curling hair.

"And then," she said, "there are apple pies and dumplings."

"For which let us praise Allah," said Thorne, handing her her laden hat.

She responded to his Allah instantly.

"I thank you, effendi," she said; and for all its lightness, the phrase had a sound of dismissal.

Thorne put on his cap, and lingeringly mounted his horse. The girl leaned against the fence post frankly watching him. She bent her head at his good-by, and was still watching as he turned in his saddle for a final salutation where the road dipped over the hill.

Thorne let Bucephalus walk home in the effort of selecting the station occupied by a girl who could climb fences and raid orchards, and yet employ a manner absolutely perfect for the dismissal of a strange man.

It was several days after this that Wrexford Thorne decided to fish the little creek that came down between the hills back of the Jossus farm. The creek lagged through cornfields and cabbage patch under a culvert that upheld the road, and then splashed into the Sound a mile from the house.

It was too sunny and warm for bass. They lay lazily in the depths of the creek, not even stirred to curiosity over Thorne's switching line. But the angler was quite happy. The perspiration rolled off his forehead from damp hair straying into ringlets that would have annoyed him could he have seen it. The sleeves of his pale-blue shirt were rolled above his elbows, and the sun was peeling the skin off the indoor fairness of his arms. He had taken off his collar, and the sun was having as easy a time with his neck as with his arms, but the young man did not seem to mind.

He climbed the barbed-wire fence that marked the boundary of the Jossus farm with easy disregard of a tear the barbs made in the long stockings he wore with his knickerbockers. He stepped into an abandoned tomato patch that skirted the creek; gathered a tomato from among the weeds that had choked the patch; sunk his teeth into its red juice, and realized, for the first time, how hot he was. A clump of willows on the edge of the creek invited him. He found another tomato, and made for them.

As he approached, a slim figure sat up from the long grass, where it had been lying at full length with hands under a hatless head. Thorne paused.

"You!" he said, and raised his cap.

The girl looked at him a second, then down at a little basket of tomatoes that lay at her side. Then she said:

"Yes, I believe so."

With her answer, her eyes came back to the man, with his reeled-in rod in one hand, and his cap and half-eaten tomato in the other, and with the clear survey of those brown eyes, the man instantly felt horribly conscious of each drop of perspiration that was trickling from his ministerial forehead to his collarless neck; of the hole the barbed

wire had made in his stockings; of the tomato in his hand. But even while this consciousness struck him with dismay, he saw laughter light the brown eyes, though it did not spread to the mouth.

"May I offer you some salt?" she said, casually proffering a folded slip of paper. "I have just finished eating a tomato."

"Thank you," he answered. "It does taste better so."

As she did not rise, he laid down his rod.

"May I sit down?" he said.

"Do. Where is Sleipnir, Odin?"

The rector had to take an instant to recall whether Sleipnir was Odin's servant or his horse. Deciding in favor of the horse, he answered:

"In the stable, having his other four legs pinned on. Odin's nag was eight-legged, was he not?"

"He was, and he liked salt."

"You come prepared," he said.

"Not for everything." And she laughed softly.

The man hastily mopped his forehead.

"Did I take tomatoes from your patch?" he asked.

"It is not mine," she said. "Perhaps it is your tomato patch?"

Thorne shook his head.

"No—no, it isn't mine."

Then he looked down at her, and the look dilated on two opinions. Who could she be? This girl, who mixed Norse mythology with roadside deprivations. Suddenly aware that he ought to say something to counteract the effect of his astonished look at her, he finally brought forth:

"Did—did you—are you going to stew these?"

"No," she answered gravely. "We had them stewed yesterday. I shall bake these."

He looked about at the patch.

"Do you come for them every day?" he asked.

There was nothing more in his voice, even to an ear strained to catch the slightest disrespect, than a moderate curiosity.

"No," she answered. "We cannot endure tomatoes every day. I come for them every other day, and then I have to fix them different ways to make them palatable."

Still bereft of ideas for the prolongation of the conversation, the man seized upon a forlorn hope.

"Are there so many ways? I imagined there were only two or three."

"There are ten. You know nothing of tomatoes."

"Oh!" said Thorne.

Her brown eyes met his own squarely.

"You would like to ask me why I do not buy tomatoes? It is because I have no money to spare for them—nor for apples."

"But—"

"Yes—I know, but you ate two of them as you came through the patch."

"So I did," said Thorne.

She raised her basket from the ground, and with a bend of the head that had a certain stateliness she said good-by. Thorne watched her move down the pathway to the culvert, wondering if there were not many centuries of women educated to please behind this girl who could climb a fence with an inimitable turn of wrist and ankle, and carry off a basket of neglected tomatoes with a grace our present world is too hurried to acquire.

He threw himself down under the tree where she had been, and lit his pipe; yet as he smoked it was not brown eyes that Wrexford Thorne saw, but long blue eyes, quiet as the blue water is quiet on a windless day—a brooding quiet over depths held in leash. In the day of storm would they be so tired and so quiet under their down-curved passionate lids?

The girl, after a half-mile walk along the river road, took a pathway that cut across fields and up a hill to a little cottage among a grove of maples. She paused at the gateway to look at the tall and very good-looking young man who sat upon her porch so absorbed he had not seen her approach. He was immaculate in white flannels, and at this

moment of grave silence he was strikingly like the man she had left at the tomato patch.

"I thought so from the first moment," said the girl to herself. "It was his brother, the rector." She gave her tomatoes a dubious look. "And a professionally good man," she said and shook her head.

Then she looked up at the quiet young man, and she laughed softly.

"Please, sir," she said aloud, "is the lady of the house home?"

He rose swiftly, and came to her.

"There is at times," he answered, "a scarlet and brown girl-woman here, but she is very elusive. She is not like other women. I think she is elfin. She goes about the country watching her woods, and her trees, and her flowers, and then when you are looking for her in the open she is suddenly to be found sweeping, and garnishing, and creating a home. She is quite marvelously made for a lady of the house, but she is also made for things more intangible, like friendship and inspiration, and the combination is not to be found but once or twice in a man's life. I think some day some very needy man will demand help of her in his living."

She swept him a curious look.

"But before he does"—and the man's voice deepened—"do you not think the man should find out if there is anything he can give to her in return for all she could give—if there is anything she needs—for you see she is self-supporting—there is no need of that help from a man for her—and she is resourceful. Perhaps you could tell me what woman elves need?"

But the girl's raillery had fled, and with it some of her color.

"What do all women need, no matter how resourceful they are?" she said. "Are their needs so different from men's?"

"I think," he answered slowly, "that you could not put the question in that way if you had not been brought up by a man."

She took instant refuge from his ambiguity in the thought of her father

that he had brought into the conversation.

"I want to speak to you about my father," she said. "Will you tell me what your plan is? I know, of course, that you have some plan in the matter, that you are interested in him as a case, that you are watching him, and that you have formed some kind of idea—"

"This afternoon I came to talk with you about your father, with the hope that I might find you alone a few minutes. That is why I waited when I found nobody here."

He turned and walked with her back to the porch, and they sat down. The doctor realized that he had been deftly turned from the personal question that was arising between them, and it had its attraction for him. The women he met were not often disposed to turn aside personalities.

"Two years ago in Lucerne, when I first met your father, his case presented peculiarities that even then made me wonder if there was not some other reason for his ill health than the one he believed in. Of course such conditions often follow the nervous shock caused by these frightful accidents, and they are frequently classed as nervous, yet I felt so sure that there was something else that when your father told me last week that he had been hit on the head at the time of the wreck I came near saying 'I told you so.' He insisted that the blow had caused him but a brief local discomfort, and that he had scarcely thought of it again until I inquired.

"Last Sunday morning, you remember, I took your father out in my machine. I spent my first half hour in such persuasion as I could muster, and then I drove him to the Port Madison Hospital, where they have just installed an X-ray apparatus, and I begged him to let me prove to myself, for the sake of my own peace of mind, whether or not I was right. He did not believe me, but he let me use the X-ray on his head. It showed that there is a small splinter of bone from the inner table of the skull that needs to be lifted from its pressure on the brain."

"The operation indicated—trephining—is not a difficult one, but for some time your father has been subject to brief periods of unconsciousness that point to a condition on which I should like consultation. You see, this fracture has existed a long time, and it makes of it a slightly different matter than if it had been repaired at once. I think I can get your father's permission to have a consultation, and to operate—perhaps here at the Port Madison Hospital if I can surmount two difficulties: his objection to the acceptance as a gift of the expense attached to these things; and his anxiety as to your welfare during the time he is in the hospital. He does not think that you could stay here alone."

The girl thought a moment.

"If he should recover his health and be able to earn his living again, there is no need of his accepting the money as a gift. It could be a loan. But of course there is the chance—of his not recovering. The second difficulty is trivial compared with what you are trying to do. I can stay here alone, or, if he does not need me, I can work."

The man had his own wish to contend with, and he held back its expression with difficulty. Not while what he could do for her or her father might seem to be offered for a price, could he ask a gift of her? Yet the temptation to offer her the utmost aid of all he owned and had was great, and he hurried into speech to avoid it.

"Have you thought of Mrs. Carson?" he asked.

He felt himself inexcusably awkward in his manner of bringing in Mrs. Carson's name as a bulwark to his own restraint. At the embarrassment in his voice the girl gave him a curious look.

"I saw you driving with Mrs. Carson on the coast road several weeks ago. I do not think I should have recognized you, but you stopped your machine to talk. You seemed very earnest. I—I have wondered a little—she is very lovely—"

She paused, suddenly realizing that she could not voice her thought.

The man did not belittle Mrs. Car-

son with any explanation for being seen with her, and the girl continued:

"She came to see us a little while after I had seen her with you—came as a man would come, pushing aside personal prejudice; but as no man could have done, looking straight into the heart of our needs and of our capabilities. She brought hope with her, opposing it to my father's prejudice against anything that bears the name of Carson. It was his first hope in all these hard months. She offered him not only a means of livelihood, but the chance of once more handling large affairs; of doing a thing he can do well; of returning to his old life and his old friendships. At that time he did not believe he would ever be well enough to accept, but you have added to this hope the one of recovery of his strength. I think if the two things could be made to join, he could give both you and Mrs. Carson but one answer."

"Do you know if your father has any special reason for his dislike of Colin Carson—other than the kind of man he was?"

"It is connected with some case begun before him, and then compromised out of court. A case in which Mr. Carson and his former guardian, John Harding, were involved—a marriage proved to be no marriage. I do not know the details. But I recall, at the time of Mrs. Carson's marriage, my father's protest to her. But she took no advice."

"Do you like her?" the man asked.

"Yes."

"It does not seem to me that you ought to stay here alone. If she came here—while your father—"

"But she is the most sought-after woman in the world."

"It is true, but there are other things that she is also; persuasive for instance, capable of taking infinite pains where she is interested, executive—". The doctor paused, struck by a sudden thought. "Did you happen to tell her that you knew me?" he asked.

"I happened to tell her when she said she had not seen me since I had grown

up, that I had seen her with you but a little while before."

The doctor turned on his conception of Mrs. Carson a new light. As it had been with Judge Wallace, Mrs. Carson had been almost masculine in her fixing on those things she had need of in himself, passing over the personal difficulties between them that usually loom large to women. Had she also been divinely feminine, foreseeing the possibilities in the task she had set him?

The doctor rose.

"I should like to bring my brother to meet you and your father. May I do so to-morrow?"

The doctor would have had to look closer than he did to have found the sudden flicker of mirth the girl hid behind lowered lids.

"Will you both come to dinner with us to-morrow?" she asked.

He hesitated over the possible trouble guests might cause her, and then, finding his hesitation ungracious, he answered:

"We shall be glad to come."

The girl watched him as he descended the hill to the road, and her eyes were wistful.

Wrexford Thorne sauntered down the road under the early afternoon sun, in his ears the sound of the voice he had once likened to the sun on wine-red velvet. It had come over the miles of intervening space with instant assent to the request he made in his brother's name on behalf of Judge Wallace and his daughter. She would arrive that night, and she would bring with her Doctor Langdon, the surgeon Doctor Thorne had asked to have in consultation. And Wrexford Thorne, declining to examine the unrest that was possessing him or even to call it by name, had concluded to go for a walk through the beautiful country thereabouts.

It was an hour later that a woman in gray blue, with blue cornflowers on her hat, suddenly leaned from an automobile that was taking a leisurely way along the coast road. Above the woman's eyes, as blue as the cornflowers,

her brows knotted. For down a path, leading from a small farmhouse to the main road, came Wrexford Thorne.

"Stop the car, Hayes," said Mrs. Carson, "just around that curve. Doctor, will you mind waiting a moment? I think I see Doctor Thorne's brother crossing the field. I will have him ride the rest of the way with us."

She nodded, and disappeared around the curve of the road.

The famous surgeon minded nothing. He was at her disposal for a large price, and he had known her some years, ever since he had been on the committee to pass on her husband's sanity. He knew she went on her own errands only when they were important to her, and that she executed them with dispatch. He took out a very good cigar, and considered the three men she had mentioned in the affair, all of whom he knew, without coming to any conclusion as to which one had caused Mrs. Carson to set out on the road to Jericho.

Wrexford Thorne had crossed the field, and was on the other side of the barbed fence as Mrs. Carson arrived at a giant sycamore. She stopped and watched the reverend gentleman swing himself over the fence. Then suddenly he paused, and, standing quite still, he passed his hand several times over his eyes as if he could not trust their story. Then he spoke aloud again:

"I am sunstruck, and because I have thought of her incessantly in the blue dress and hat, because she is coming to-day——"

Then his face that had been brightly flushed paled and grew still, for he held no fancy of a sun-heated brain, but a woman flushing under his look and his words; breathless, astounded, alluring. So the two stood gazing at each other, a long, still look, and the man knew but the need of restraint; the woman but the need of expression.

"I have Doctor Langdon with me," she said at last, "and the machine is waiting on the road. Will you come back with us?"

"Yes. When is Doctor Langdon to see Judge Wallace?"

"When your dinner with the judge and Miss Amy is over, Doctor Thorne is coming after him this evening, and he will call on the judge, and talk with him a while. I think their real consultation is for to-morrow morning."

"And you?" said the rector.

"I shall take advantage of my sex, and look after Miss Amy. It is a little new for me to have a girl to chaperon; so I shall spend to-night thinking how I may bring it about, and what I shall do when I have brought it about."

Amy Wallace gave the last touch to the wild flowers on her table, and, laughing at the tomatoes waiting for the mayonnaise she had been making, she went to the door to look for her father. Worrying ceaselessly over what Doctor Thorne had told her yesterday about her father, Amy had hoped he would not insist on his usual trip to Port Madison for the mail; especially since, because of her dinner guests, she could not go with him. But he would not be denied.

There was no glimpse of the tall figure that usually came so slowly up the hill, and Amy turned into her tiny bedroom to put on the white linen dress she had ironed earlier in the day in honor of her simple dinner.

She saw the two brothers coming up the hill as she passed from her room to the kitchen to look at the rolls she was baking, and a little thrill of excitement stained her cheeks.

Carleton Thorne had walked the short distance between the Jossus farm and the little cottage in absorbed silence, and his brother, to whom respect for another's mood seemed the foundation of comradeship, had been equally silent.

On the porch of the cottage they waited. A white-gowned girl with scarlet cheeks moved down the little hallway, and held out her hand to Carleton Thorne, smiling. And as she did so, Wrexford Thorne leaned forward, staring at her as if he could not believe his eyes. It was incredible! Even as his brother presented him, Wrexford Thorne found himself waiting for his

cue. It came at once. Having been bred by a man, she did not impose discretion on any man on her account.

"You see how it happened that I knew you, Odin. Are Sleipnir's other four legs staying pinned on?" Then to Carleton Thorne: "Your brother helped me gather the tomatoes he is to eat for his dinner to-night. Has he told you?"

"No," said Carleton Thorne.

"You will tell him, will you not, while I serve dinner? I am expecting father every minute. He is late. But meantime it would embarrass me frightfully if my dinner spoiled."

She gave the rector a level glance of suppressed laughter, and he leaned up against the door as she left them, and chuckled.

"Well, upon my word!" he said lamely.

"Suppose," said Carleton Thorne, now thoroughly angry, "that you explain it to me."

"Explain what to you?" said his brother. "That I have come across Miss Wallace two different times without having any idea who she was?"

"But you evidently talked with her, even if you did not know who she was."

"Yes, and I shall talk with her again, I hope. But who would have thought she would be Miss Wallace?"

Carleton Thorne came closer.

"Rex," he said, "this is the girl that I hope to make my wife."

Wrexford Thorne gave his brother's angry face a quick look.

"You will be most fortunate if you do," he said. "I wish you success from the bottom of my heart. As for this—it is merely funny—nothing more."

If the doctor had a rejoinder it was stopped by the girl's return to the porch.

"Gentlemen," she said, "my dinner is ready, but my careless father has not come. I have never known him to do this before. He is punctilious beyond belief. He intended to be here a half hour ago—" She caught the doctor's eye, and a shade passed over her face. "You do not think—oh, I begged him not to go alone, but he has been ex-

pecting a small check, and he hoped that—

"It is only a short walk," said the doctor. "When did he start?"

"About an hour ago. But he often stops to rest at the beach before he starts up the hill. Perhaps—"

The doctor hesitated a moment.

"I think," he said at length, "that I will go after him."

The girl's face whitened a little.

"I will go with you, please. I could not stay here—waiting. Will you have coffee before we go? It is ready—waiting—and perhaps he will come."

They waited a few minutes longer, drinking the coffee she brought them, but there was no sight of Judge Wallace when they started down the pathway to the road.

Nadine Carson, bathed and re-gowned in blue, filmier than that she had worn on her long ride, had watched the rector and his brother leave for the Wallace cottage, and then, after her fashion of taking her questions out under the sky for answer, she left the farmhouse and walked down the road, hunting for some pathway to the shore.

She found one that stole between the shelved rocks at the side of the road toward a tiny beach walled in by shallow cliffs, and as she neared the sand she saw Judge Wallace ahead of her, seated on a low shelf of rock, with his head resting on his arm. She paused, looking at the tired pose of the tall figure with its fine head and that quality his daughter also had that even in repose signified breeding more than a century old.

And watching him, her curved brows came closer to each other, and her lips pressed themselves into a narrow line. It utterly removed from her face its appealing femininity. She became cold, and clear, and thoughtful.

This was the only being in the world who had told her that marriage with Colin Carson would be shame and misery for her; and she had not been old enough to believe such words could mean what they did when they summed

up marriage. This man alone had tried to stop her, and in no way had she been able to repay the debt. She came to him slowly, and, seeing her, he rose hesitatingly, as if the effort was too much for his strength.

"Let me sit down beside you instead," she said in her low, cool voice. "I want to speak to you a moment."

Preoccupied as she was, it did not occur to her as curious that he should be resting here when his dinner guests had already gone to his house. As he assented, she gave a swift look behind the quiet gravity of his face to the pain and weariness there.

"You have just come?" he said.

"Yes. I have come to see you. But first, I want to speak to you a moment about myself if you will let me."

His face that was white and drawn took on a watchful look—a call on his vitality that seemed to bring new fatigues, for he leaned his head back on the rock again.

"You will recall," said Nadine gently, "that I grew up dependent in the home of distant connections—neither father nor mother. You also recall the kind of home it was. There were no men in it, either as companions or guardians. There was a mother, frankly bent on social achievement, on placing her three daughters; a little reluctant to give much to the outsider I really was. It was a life whose aridity no man could appreciate. I was denied all practical education by which I could have achieved independence, and, while too young to know the value of independence, I was told almost hourly that a fortunate marriage was my one chance. There were no ideals in that household of friendship or love or kindness—nothing save a worship of success in every little form it could take. And I was not permitted to interfere in any way with any success the other three girls might achieve."

"Then came Colin Carson, whose life had been spent gaining what he wanted for the asking. He was, in those days, handsome in a way. There was no chance for a girl in my position to know the man's manner of living or its

results. He came seeking to please, quiet enough, with a touch of eccentricity, that might well seem to a young girl attractive originality. And he passed over the other girls and chose me—demanded me—the more because of my instinctive reluctance. He was not used to being rebuffed by women.

"I heard only envy of my opportunity from those about me. I was told ceaselessly that this was good fortune beyond all my deserts—for I had not lived my dependent life without rebellion and protest. As the possible wife of a multimillionaire, I suddenly became a human being in the house where I lived. I was utterly unguarded, unformed, unwise with that terrible ignorance of the uneducated girl. Against all these influences only one voice was raised—yours.

"In the after months when I found that the marriage I had made was not independence, but a terrorized slavery; when I paid for my luxury with despair; when I learned what marriage might be, and what I had irretrievably missed, as a woman, when I gave up the chance of love, of children, for money, for a horrible life with a half-mad creature, who was yet my husband, you must believe that I thought often of you—of this one voice I might have heeded. That is why I have always kept a watch on you. My debt to you is unpaid. For a little hour or two you were my friend.

"I think you cannot approve of the woman I grew into; yet perhaps you can see that somehow I must have set forth to other ways of living, and that first I must find values—the things that do not count as well as the things that do. This hideous weight of money belonging to a man I have far more cause to hate than you—do you think I like it any better than you do? But it is here. It must be managed wisely. I am responsible for it. Is it so strange to you that I should ask you to bear your share of this responsibility—you who are the only connection of the Carson family left?

"And the other thing I ask of you; it is not to let me do for your daughter

what you yourself could do, but only what no man can do for a girl—to make things easier for her in a woman's way until you are well and able to arrange her life on a larger plan than it can now attain. I think you hesitate over allowing me to relieve a little of my own burden by measuring it with yours, because of the kind of woman you suppose me to be. Yet you will find in my life nothing that unfits me to companion a girl.

"Do you think I do not know what *you* have endured these last years? It is because I have born pain, and weariness, and despair, and hidden it, that I do know. Will you not give me the same understanding? You and I have but taken different ways of hiding our hurt for our pride's sake. You alone here with your woods and your ocean, I alone in my swirling, man-filled cities."

She paused, her luminous blue eyes still looking beyond his drawn face into whatever it was that made up the man himself; and from this he answered her.

"I shall be glad of your friendship for myself and for Amy—glad to do what I can to keep it—to be helped by you—if—you—will."

And then, as he spoke, the drawn look grew suddenly less tense, and his face from pallor took on an ashen tinge, and but for her arms he would have fallen.

They found them as the dusk gathered round the cliff-bound beach—Nadine kneeling beside the unconscious man, trying to revive him. As the three reached them, she looked up.

"He has been this way only a few minutes. He seemed to be resting here on his way home, and we talked together—we made friends—but I think, perhaps, he must have been here some time, and that he would not tell me how ill he was, when I came upon him."

She stood aside to let Carleton Thorne take her place, and, when at length he shook his head, she took Amy by the arm as the two men lifted her father.

"It is not an ordinary loss of con-

sciousness," said the doctor to Amy. "But you must not be afraid. We will take him to the farm. It is nearest, and Doctor Langdon is there. Perhaps you will go on ahead and tell them we are coming."

To those who watched, it seemed an intolerable time that the two doctors worked with the man who lay on Wrexford Thorne's bed. Apparently there was no result from their work. With a sinking heart, Amy saw them finally relax their efforts, and speak with each other in low tones. She caught a phrase here and there that strung her to attention—hemorrhage—and again meningeal hemorrhage—probably epidural.

She saw them examine pupil and pulse; she saw Carleton Thorne pass light fingers over her father's head, calling Doctor Langdon's attention to a certain spot, and again they spoke together in low-voiced consultation, and presently she heard them talking to her. They spoke to her of a probable small cyst resulting from the bone pressure, of hemorrhage that must be immediately arrested, of an emergency operation at once, as soon as her father could be prepared and the room made ready.

Carleton Thorne came to her side, and spoke gently.

"If the hemorrhage is epidural, and by this I mean between the skull and the outermost membranous envelope of the brain, there is every chance of your father's recovery. If it's subdural—beneath the dura—there is still a large chance. If we do not operate at once, he will possibly pass from unconsciousness—to death."

Amy's eyes dwelt a moment on her father's still face, and then passed to Carleton Thorne.

"You will do it, then, at once?"

"Yes," he answered quietly. "And now we shall want many things. We shall want things done quickly here in the house, and other things sent for from the Port Madison Hospital. Mrs. Carson, will you let Rex use your chauffeur and your machine? I shall send him for a list of things I shall make out, and the best operative nurse the hospital will give him. Rex, the

surgeon at the hospital must verify the presence in the machine of every article that I am sending for, and you must telephone before you leave. Mrs. Carson, and Miss Jossus, and Miss Amy will help us prepare our patient and the room. We have fortunately electric light. There is but a minimum chance of accident to your machine, Mrs. Carson?"

"Hayes, my man, is absolutely reliable and expert at quick repair."

"Very well. Doctor Langdon will telephone the hospital, and they will be ready for you, Rex."

Swiftly and quietly, with that beautiful care that only skilled surgeons know, the preparations for the grim fight with death went forward. The room became gradually bare of everything that could be taken out—a white-sheeted operating room, inhabited by a still figure about which moved watchful men and women on their errands of preparation, sterilization, arrangement.

In an incredibly short time, Wrexford Thorne had returned.

For a moment before he made his final preparations, Carleton Thorne spoke with Amy Wallace, but none other heard what he said.

The night wore on. Outside the door the two women waited. Miss Jossus, while she had a task to accomplish, could endure the tension; but the long wait was beyond her, and she had gone downstairs in tears. Wrexford Thorne was a familiar figure in these quiet battles of the operating table, and he remained with the doctors to be of such service as he could.

Afterward, when Amy recalled these long, frightful minutes of doubt, she wondered if she could have endured them but for the presence of Nadine, whose brooding quiet, for all its silence, surrounded her with consideration.

And presently Carleton Thorne opened the door softly—a different Carleton Thorne than she had ever seen, white with dark rings under his eyes; with the fatigue of unbearable tension in his face. Yet in the look he gave the girl there was a divine hope—and an infolding tenderness.

Amy went to him with a little sob, and he took her into the room.

Nadine turned to the window, and leaned out into the starlit night. And this look with which Carleton Thorne had brought the girl to his side, the yearning tenderness of the man who has fought for the woman well loved and won, knocked at her heart with a burden of new pain. This was the birth-right she had sold for the pottage of her gold-showered life. This was love, need, and service, and faith, and honor, and kindness. And without it mere living was a little thing.

The door closed softly again, and Wrexford Thorne stood beside her. Need—she had needed him. Service—he had given it. Honor—one fought for honor; it was not given unasked. But love must be built upon it. She saw it with blinding clearness.

Was this love that was coming to her, this pain that besought and swayed her, built on new things of the spirit she had not dreamed of in these years of struggle and defeat? If this was love, it brought no rest and no joy, but a grim need for struggle, sterner than any fight she had ever fought.

The man was speaking, and she brought herself back to his words.

"They think it has been a success beyond their hopes. The condition had gone on so long—it was not as if they had operated at the beginning. But they believe he will waken normal, his mind cleared, with only his strength to regain. And Miss Amy—"

He paused, and Nadine concluded.

"Miss Amy," she said, "when her father is better, will come to me for a little while. Almost the last thing her father said before you found us was that I might do these things for her. We shall immerse ourselves in chiffons; the one diversion that takes no strength, and is a rest after strain. We shall fuss with laces and Things-from-the-Street-of-Peace, made for trousseaux. For I think we shall have a real wedding, do not you?"

"I think so," said the man, looking at her. "Was that also in your mind when you asked for help on your road to Jericho?"

"I—do not—know," said Nadine "I—I thought—dimly of—love."

The man looked down at her in silence.



A GRAY DAY

I MAY not, this gray day, elude
A cloudy, melancholy mood;
The thrush its ecstasy withholds,
Hid in the thicket's leafy folds;
The vagrant minstrel wind forgets
To finger its elusive frets;
Yet joy and song but wait the drift
Of yonder wrack to leap and lift,
While, like an April-budded bole,
I, too, await the golden rift
To take the sun into my soul!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



THE VOICE IN THE SILENCE

BY KATE JORDAN

August, 1910.
No. — RUE DU CHERCHE MIDI,
PARIS.

HONORIA, old girl—greeting! You did not expect to hear that I had pulled off the deal so soon. Well, I have, my dear, and pulled it off most successfully; but somehow I feel little satisfaction in it. I'm afraid I'll always remain something of a sentimentalist, though to the police and the public I am only a crook. And so, dear, are you. But I do think, Honny, we were meant to be something better than plunderers. I believe that we both have in us the stripe that redeemed Becky Sharpe. Had we two pals been born with settled incomes tagged onto us, how interesting we could have made respectability! Lacking the incomes, however, we are natural-born Oliver Twists, and keep asking for more. When we don't get it we take it.

You're dying to hear just how I managed with young Vanderduyken, where he is, what's "on," and why I'm writing this to you from Paris in August, when every one gilt-edged is either drinking the waters in Germany or motoring over mountains in Switzerland. Dearie, I'm keeping out of sight because I can afford to take a rest—for I have the necklace!

This is just the place to "lay low" in. It's an old pension in one of the most ancient streets of the Quartier.

It's hidden far back, and built around an old garden and a broken fountain. You can't even hear the street sounds.

I'll stay here under cover until the first rush of the hunt is over, take care of my health, and get back my looks. I did the society stunt with Ted Vanderduyken until I was worn to a rag and had shadows under my eyes—London can do you up. Ted took a house in Grosvenor Square, and had two motors. Instead of the French title we decided on, I took a Spanish one, and, as the Duchess of Aldana y Vizcaya, I was a dream!

Everything was most correct; Ted had me chaperon all his little parties, and incidentally made such love to me it's a wonder he didn't sweep me into a registry office and get the knot actually tied.

I felt that I was safe from recognition by any of the Scotland Yard people, for in my other escapade here, four years ago, I was, as you know, as blonde as that Swedish maid of yours. I didn't do my hair black, as you suggested. I found after trying on about twenty wigs that I really looked more unlike the police idea of what I am when I really *look like my ownself*.

This is about as clear as pie paste, but think it out—in other words, I went back to my own shade of red, not a bit like the awful port-wine tint that one spots as dye at once. With this, I made my eyes up most delicately with deep

shadows about them and coal-black lashes—this quite destroyed the effect of their being blue, and made me seem red-haired, white-skinned, and dark-eyed.

About my conquest of Van I won't go too much into detail. It was quite usual—not a bit interesting. He's a little moneyed fool, and that lets him out. After the fourth meeting, he ceased hoping he could take me flippantly, and began to look wonderingly at me; the next time, as my remoteness and Spanish hauteur continued, he began to look longingly; then his appetite gave out, and he would only nibble hors d'œuvres and sip green chartreuse; at last he confided that he couldn't sleep at all; and then in a wild burst declared that he would never be happy again until I was duly ticketed as Mrs. Vanderduyken.

Of course he thought I loved him. My sighs and sad, tender glances had told him that. It never occurred to the little idiot to doubt it for a second. Really, I would have felt a little sorry for fleecing him, Hon, if his conceit had not sickened me.

Our secret engagement had lasted a week or so before I ventured to speak of the necklace—begged him to show it to me. This was after a very good luncheon, and he agreed to favor my sentimental enthusiasm. You were right about it's being in safe deposit in Paris—his mother had lived there for fully fifteen years and her jewels had not been removed.

I don't know what formalities Van went through to get the necklace, but as he's been tacitly engaged for years to his cousin, Drusilla Rutherford, I believe he said he was going to have the diamonds reset for her. At any rate, he came back in a week.

I'll never forget the curious feeling that went over me when I heard the chug of his motor, and wondered if he had it, if the whole game had simply meant a lot of useless expense to me, or a big haul to keep us both going for years.

Well, more curious still was the feeling to see the ostentatious, strutting, lit-

tle idiot come into my sitting room, pulling the necklace out of his trousers pocket, as if it were a piece of string. He flung it into my lap, and insisted on my wearing it to the opera that night.

Now, it may be that secret police instructions read as follows:

Find a red-haired woman, last seen at Covent Garden, during "La Bohème," wearing the Vanderduyken necklace and a smile like the cat's after it has swallowed the canary.

So the matter stands, Honny, dear. I wouldn't dare write you this, but sent as it is in the care of your irreproachable housekeeper's daughter, I know I am running no risks. I'll stay on here a while and then go to Switzerland to a new place in Savoy, and one I've often longed to stay in. It's between Chamonix and St. Gervais in a wilderness as yet unspoiled by hotels. I'll write you from there.

I should think if you get to Amsterdam by October you could sell the stones safely. I'll have them all unstrung and ready.

Your ever faithful,
JESS.

September —
"ON THE ROAD TO CHAMONIX."
P. O. CHAMONIX.
CHALET L'AIGLE.

Honoraria! I must write your sonorous, full name quite out to preface my first words about this spot. Honoraria, I am halfway to heaven! I'm five thousand feet above the spot you may be walking on this minute—above Herald Square and lobster palaces—above racket, noise, and sin.

Old girl, you would not know me. You always said I had an innocent face—well, now I am the Madonna type, *tout à fait*. You know a neighborliness to Mont Blanc—for my little house hangs over what might be called its hip—has a most ennobling effect. The air is a marvelous tonic—it fairly washes out one's eyes—and the rest has made me over.

But it's looking up a good many more thousand feet to that serene, soft peak of purest, translucent snow against the

steadfast blue that has really filled my body with its own light. I cheat myself into fancying that I'm just as I was when, as little Jess Norris, I went singing with my schoolbooks through my native Connecticut woods. I try to forget that I've made my bed of down filched from other people, and that I must lie on it, even if the down bids fair to smother me at times.

I walk a lot. This tiny place I have is scarcely a chalet—little more than a hut. I do my own work, build fires, buy goats' milk at dawn from adorable Savoyards in clean, rough clothes, who smell of new-mown hay and the pines. Incidentally, I am supposed to be a maid getting the place ready for my mistress who is to come later.

I fancy it would tax the intuitiveness of Scotland Yard to fancy the recent Spanish duchess doing her own work in a hut that has a clay floor, a roof like a Pierrot's hat, and an old shrine of the Virgin built into its cobbled wall beside my little sunken door.

This letter is just to put you at peace about me. Write me to Chamonix, to Madame Cornwallis—that's the name of the expected mistress who will never arrive. Nothing has happened—just nothing. From dawn till night the world is filled with this powerful peace; though it reproaches me, it seems to put me to bed like a mother, to shut my door against all evil.

I hear you laugh and say that I'm an out-and-out fool. Perhaps. But I never liked myself better.

JESS.

September —
CHALET L'AIGLE.

Hon, dear, is it only a little more than two weeks since I wrote you that I was alone here and steeped in a beautiful tranquillity? Tranquillity no longer! The piney air is just thrilling with possibilities. I've had an adventure—the most enchanting, the most puzzling of my life. A man has appeared in these solitudes, and I keep thinking about him as if I were a lovesick girl. Of course it's folly of the maddest sort—a woman like me!

It came about this way: I went to

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the little tucked-away bookshop in the infantile, comic-opera town of Chamonix, and bought myself some really bulky French books in Tauchnitz.

Armed with one of Pierre Loti's—when my breakfast things were duly put away and my hearth duly swept—I went up into the hilly woods on a heavenly morning, deep into them, and settled myself on one of the big boulders that made a sort of wall on one side of a great mountain torrent whose roar filled the woods like the voice of the sea. My jersey made a pillow on the rock, and there I read, and there among the leaf shadows and the sound of waters I blinked and dreamed, and at last I slept.

A thrill like the vibrations left by a bugle call awoke me. I couldn't understand it then—and I can't even now. But I found myself half springing up, leaning my palm on the boulder, and looking about me, waiting for something. It may have been that a pine cone had fallen on me, or some wild little creature of the woods had touched me in passing—I don't know—but as I looked there appeared suddenly a good way up the mountain and in the middle of the torrent a figure that stood out against the gleams of the sky in a way that seemed fairly supernatural.

It was a man, and as he stood with arms flung up he could have posed for a figure of "Triumph." As I watched I saw him put his arms stiffly to his sides, and, leaping into the air with the bewildering lightsomeness and precision of one of the mountain goats, come down on a boulder several yards nearer me.

So it went. He came down the wall of rocks, sometimes on those bulging from the middle of the waters by arrowlike leaps, while the torrent boiled under him and the spray left iridescent mist about his head.

When at last he came close enough for me to note details, I saw a peasant, barefooted, with old corduroy trousers rolled to his knees, with a rough, cotton shirt well open over his brown chest, and a dark-blue *béret* far back on his head.

But his face, Honoria! Though you are a cynic, you love beauty, and this boy's face—he was about twenty-six or so—would have delighted your eyes. It was not only handsome in a virile, straight-featured way—it *glowed*. Resplendent youth flashed from it. He was as inspiring as a marching regiment.

I watched him as he came on in leaps, a joyous cry breaking from him with each one. Landing almost opposite me on a particularly ragged stone where he had to balance himself with a dexterousness fairly uncanny, he paused and smiled at me in a sort of wonder.

One speaks to all the peasants. I spoke to him, and found my voice breathless, for I seemed to be dreaming some lovely, woodland thing. I bade him good morning in French. He sang out his greeting in a gay and charming way, but with the voice, the manner of a gentleman. My ear has been made exact from a variegated experience. This was no peasant.

"Aren't you afraid?" I asked. "If you lose your balance and fall in the water, it may sweep you on, and the bed is full of stones as sharp as knives."

"I know," he laughed, "but I will not fall."

"You must not be too sure," I said, and perhaps he saw the longing I felt to have him stop there and talk to me. I folded my elbows on the stone, put my chin down on them, and looked at him. "Most mistakes are made when we are too secure. Don't you think so?"

He was on a huge rock midway in the stream. He put his hands on his hips, and his lip curled in a superb confidence.

"Mademoiselle speaks in allegory. Life is not as violent or as cruel as this mountain torrent."

"Life can be very cruel," I said, and nodded. "But don't let me keep you—if you are in a hurry."

He hesitated. "I must go now. But may I come back and talk to you, mademoiselle?"

"That would be very nice. I like

talking to the natives of every place I visit."

"I will come back," he said, and then, stiffening his arms again at his sides, he gave another javelinlike leap into the sun, and so went down the stream.

Almost at the foot of the mountain he paused, then leaped straight across the boiling water to the side that I was on. He did this beautifully, his body turning in the air before he descended on the edge of the woods. There he rested, looked back, waved his cap at me, and dashed into the woods as if he were Hippomenes pursuing Atalanta.

I'll stop now, and write more by and by.

I had almost given him up, and was gathering up my book and walking stick, when he appeared. He came toward me between the trees, with a brisk but graceful swing. He wore boots now, and the old corduroy trousers came down to his ankles. He carried the *béret* crushed under his arm, and I could see he had freshly brushed back his black hair. The city man spoke through his garb. Reaching me, he put his heels together and bowed very low.

"I came as soon as I could. May I give you this?" He drew a large bunch of edelweiss from the bulging pocket of his coat. "Will you honor me?"

The edelweiss, Hon, is like a small star made of white flannel and with a brass button for a centre; it has no perfume, and does not seem especially attractive to me, but I give it the respect I give an orchid, because I've never seen either of them growing—one of the fever swamps, one of the mountain peaks.

"I hope you picked it yourself," I said in English, as I took it. He looked confused. "You speak no English?"

"So little—very badly," he answered. I repeated what I'd said in French.

"I did, mademoiselle. I picked it before dawn—up there." He swung his arm in the direction of the "drome-

dary's humps" beside Mont Blanc. "I would not offer it to you if I had bought it from a flower seller in the town," he said reproachfully.

"No? Why not?" I was studying him, puzzled and delighted.

"That would be too tame," he answered, and his glowing, slate-gray eyes met mine with attention and respect. "You want real things. You are of the great world."

"And so are you," I said, as we walked on. "I'm curious about you. You are not a mountaineer. How are you able to leap, barefoot, down sharp rocks as you did? It made me dizzy to watch you."

"I was born here," he answered.

"In Chamonix?"

"Not down there, in the town." He shrugged. "Up!" He waved backward toward the peaks. "Until a few years ago my father kept a chalet near the glacier of the Bossons—a halfway house for climbing parties. I was born up there. From fourteen to eighteen I was learning to be a guide. Then my father died. An Italian journalist, who used to come nearly every summer to climb, had me educated. Now I am his secretary, and live in Rome. Every summer I come back. The mountains call me. I have to come."

Honor, wasn't it beautiful? Wasn't it like a dream come true for me to be walking down that silent mountain, the sunny, snow-chilled air beating in my face, and listening to such words as these?

The upshot of it was that when my door was reached and I said good-by to him, I felt I had to tell him this much of the truth—that I was not a servant. I told him I was a singer who had stolen away to have a complete rest in solitude. I bound him to confidence, and promised to go to the Mer de Glace with him the following day.

To get this off by the first steamer, I'll stop now. I'm looking bully, Hon—no champagne, no late hours, and only two cigarettes a day. I washed my face in dew at six o'clock this morning.

JESS—OWN SISTER TO HEBE.

September —
CHALET L'AIGLE.

Quite likely you're stewing in humidity in New York, Hon. Here, although the sun shines gloriously, it has grown cold enough for a thick jacket. The nights are frost tonics, tempered indoors by blazing fires. The tourists are melting southward from Chamonix. I seem alone in the world—I and Jean Jolicœur.

Yes, that's his name, Hon. Funny and childish, isn't it? I tease him by Anglicizing it, and calling him Jack Prettyheart. And yes—you can shake your head, too, as you read—I *am* in love with him. It's not a bit like my other little affairs, either; they were small change of the heart, threepenny bits! This is so real that when I'm not madly, madly happy, I'm terribly, terribly sad. I wish—I wasn't going to write it, but I will—I wish I were what I seem to be! I wish this as I never wished it before. He thinks me nice and fine, and his respect is as sweet and reviving as the drinks we take in our palms from the mountain springs.

To answer your questions about business: Everything's all right. I'm sure they're completely off the scent. I'll be ready for you, never fear. Make it the latter part of October, I think if I meet you in Dijon it will be safer than Geneva. I could give you the stones then, and leave you to do the rest in Holland, alone. After that it would be well for me to get back to America by a roundabout way.

If you're still keen for the Buenos Ayres scheme next winter, I could go directly to South America from England and wait for you to join me. I haven't touched the necklace yet, but it will be ready in time, never fear.

After you read this, if you take me seriously at all, you'll wonder what's going to be the end of Jean and me? He hasn't said a word yet, but I can see. It's that most delicious time before a man says the actual, blunt words, when the air is electric with your thoughts and his, when a chance touch of fingers makes you thrill, when the eyes say what the lips do not.

What's going to be the end? I'll tell you. When he has said what I'm waiting for, I'll live in a fool's paradise for a little while, and then—poor boy!—no matter how it hurts him, I'll disappear. Oh, be sure I'll do the sensible thing, Hon. But when that day comes it won't hurt him half as much as it will hurt me.

Two days later: I'll write you a few lines every day. I like it. You seem here, listening to me. I wish, Honny, that you really were. It would do me a lot of good to have you roll out your sardonic laugh at me through the rings of your eternal cigarette, to hear you say:

"Jess, pull yourself together. Don't be a silly goat. Be a sport and play according to the rules."

I need that sort of talk, for I'm becoming a dreamer of dreams that give me much joy and then reactions of despair. To tell you the cold truth, Hon, I'm afraid of the love that fills me for this boy, two years younger than I am. I know he loves me, and yet he has not told me so. To make him speak I've tried everything short of telling him what I feel. I'm frantic to have him call me one endearing name. I've fairly flung myself at him. I've tempted him as I know how—and all this with seeming unconsciousness.

When I stand close to him I can feel him tremble, but he seems in awe of me. I can feel him put me from him as if I were something forbidden. If he were a young priest, he could not better suggest fear of me and inward renunciation.

Yesterday when we walked to the Cascade de Blaitière, I pretended to slip, so that it was necessary for him to catch me with both arms. I felt his heart's wild beating. He held me in longing for a few seconds, and then released me with a respect that was an apology.

It must be that, though I've told him I'm free, he doesn't believe it. Perhaps he thinks I'm hiding from a husband; and, living up to the purity of the snow peaks among which he was

born, he will have none of me. Whatever it is, I could cry on the floor like a child.

He left only an hour ago. He had been having tea with me.

"You are returning to Italy soon?" I said, and I had purposely let my voice tell its own story, as I looked steadily at him. We were sitting before the fire of logs and cones.

"In a few days it will be all over," he answered, his gaze sad and expressive of things I could not read.

"A few days?" I echoed. "And perhaps we will never see each other again. Have you thought of that?"

"Many times."

"Will you—care?" A wild desire to cry out all I felt gripped me. I wanted to take his hands, kiss them, and put them to my face. I dropped to my knees, close to him. Hot though the blaze was, Hon, I was sick and chilled. "Won't you care at all?"

"How can you ask me that?" he murmured miserably, and looked away.

He had never said as much as this before. I set my teeth desperately, and let my hand steal along his as it clasped his knee tensely.

"You think about me?" I pleaded.

"A great deal."

I crept a little nearer him. "What?"

"*This* is what I think." He gently withdrew from my touch, dropped his elbows to his knees, and half covered his eyes with his curved hands. He looked into the fire. "Our meeting, our friendship have been like the Alpine glow." The hopelessness of his tone was the final touch to my unhappiness. "A beautiful, luminous rose color, it comes trailing down the mountains, and clings to them like a filmy robe; it makes them radiant; it is so wonderful that all who see it pause to pray. But the Alpine glow lasts only a few moments—and it comes only as the sun goes."

He stood up. I crouched there. He looked into my upturned face. I never saw deeper pity in human eyes.

"That is our story," he said, and went to the door. "We have had our Alpine

glow. After it good-by comes. The sun goes down for both of us."

He opened the door, and something superstitious and awesome entered the room, for the outside world was all a faint pink. We knew the glow was upon the mountains, and we could see a diadem moon and one bright star crowning one high, gleaming peak. The world was so silent it was terrible, and yet it seemed full of that voice, calling to me, melting my heart.

"Jean," I faltered, "won't you tell me why you say this—what you mean?"

"I will come back to-night," he said, and went out.

And here I am, alone with my questioning, anxious heart, and that voice in the silence! I don't expect you to fully understand, Honny. But I want you to know.

ST. GERVAIS.

The next morning:

Yes, I've left Chamonix, and left it hurriedly. I've been sitting here for hours trying to write you this, and now the morning is well on. I shall not write you of what I feel at this moment, but you will know what I have passed through when I set the bare facts before you.

Jean came back at nine o'clock. The fire was blazing, the curtains at my queer little windows drawn, and I was in one of the prettiest of the simple gowns I brought with me. When he came in, I was at once conscious of a new repose in his manner, a maturity not evident before. It was just as if during the interval he had changed from an ingenuous twenty-six to a serious thirty.

I had rouged my face—I'd been so hideously pale—and I'd penciled my eyes to make them brighter. From the one sad and yet keenly comprehensive glance that he gave me, I saw that he was aware of this, and that the knowledge made him sorry for me.

Sorry! We had changed places. I was confused, wistful, wondering, anxious—he was my master, full of a strength that made me pitiful in his eyes. I could not talk. In a dazed way,

I sat down in the old chimney settle and motioned him to a chair.

"No, dear lady," he said, remaining standing, with his cap crushed in his hands. He gave me another of the long, keen, pitying looks. "*I'm here to get the necklace*," he said flatly, and in English as perfect as my own.

I stared at him. I thought I was losing my mind, and that my own lips must have uttered that astounding phrase. Think of it! Why, the house seemed to cave in—and then to somehow right itself in a twisting way that made me dizzy.

As well as I remember, I said, without moving:

"What did you say?"

"I am here to get the Vanderduyken necklace," he said in the same tone.

I had the sense to try to rally.

"I don't understand what you mean. What you can have heard to make you suppose—"

"I am a detective," he said, and showed his shield, adding with a bitter smile: "One of the new school, able to blind even such a clever woman as you."

He began to explain. By an effort my stunned intelligence followed him. His profession, he said, excused him for having been deceitful from the start. His right name was Philip Le Breton, and he had been born of French parents on the island of Guernsey, but had spent much of his boyhood with his father's people in the French Alps. His father was a successful detective both in London and Paris, and he had inherited a taste for the work. Although a civil engineer by profession, he enjoyed sometimes taking a case just for the fascination of it.

He had seen me in London, and when the theft of the necklace had been reported he had asked for the job of tracking me, and with two others, who had gone following different clues, had been given it.

I had thought myself so safe in Paris, Honny! Even there I had been under his eyes all the time. He had hired a studio whose back windows overlooked the pension garden. Instead of having

me arrested on suspicion of being the "Spanish duchess," he had waited for a chance to play his skill against my craft—with the result that should certainly have been gratifying to his professional pride.

After he stopped speaking, I sat mute. I dare say I was a piteous sight. I was not thinking of the defeat as a money loss, or of my probable punishment. I was thinking of *him*. I felt the horror and taint of sacrilege—it left me speechless, motionless.

"I came to cheat you," he said. "I stayed—for a different reason. But I have conquered that, and I am true to my duty."

I tried to harden myself. I tried to fight him.

"You seem to think I have stolen some necklace. You are on the wrong track—"

"Don't!" The word rounded me up. "Don't let us go through lies. It's bad enough!" he said in a low tone of pain.

He came over and sat before me, bending forward.

"You know what might have been. Oh, Jess! Isn't it a pity?"

I could only answer blankly: "You are right. No more lies between us! And it is a pity."

There was silence for a while.

"Jess," he said—with, oh, such kindness—"you are not bad. The good struggles in you so hard you have to try to strangle it. How you've come to be what you are, I don't know. Somewhere in your life you took the wrong turning, but you've known no peace upon the road. Watching you, a line of Stevenson's has haunted me: 'It is not enough for a man to say "I will be base." ' That's how it is with you. You're greater than your sins."

He said more to me. I can't write it all. Some things won't bear writing. But he did not ask again for the necklace. I went to where it was hidden, and brought it to him. He let it lie on the table between us for a moment, and looked at me across it. I shall never forget that look.

"Are you to arrest me, too?" I managed to ask. "Is it expected?"

"It's expected. But I have mules waiting. Get some things ready and get out of here—alone—to St. Gervais. You can trust me to give a realistic account of your clever escape."

I watched him put the necklace into his wallet, and then through a mist that burned I saw him put out his hand. But I broke down, and held him, and told him I wanted to die.

"Why not live instead—*really* live?" he asked.

"What is there left for me?" I sobbed.

"All that you long to be!"

"No hunted thief can be that!" I said in despair.

"Suppose Vanderduyken is persuaded to withdraw the charge? Suppose the prosecution is dropped?" His eyes, burning with hope, uplifted me. "If the right road is made clear before you, will you take it?"

"I will!" I said. "I will!"

"Give me your hands then." He held them both crushed to his heart. "I'll be near to help you, Jess—as long as I live!"

I know this part is trash to you, Honny. You are frantic about the necklace. That's natural. But spare your curses on me for a fool for giving it willingly. As it happens, I could never have left Chamonix with it—he had attended to that—so what I did for the sake of the right I would have had to do for the law.

Good-by, Honoria. We won't meet in Buenos Ayres or any other place. I'm making a fresh start. As soon as it's safe to do it, I shall begin earning an honest living. This is not an infatuation, responsible for what you will call "madness." It's the sweetest sanity, and I was brought to it by three things; my own discontent, the voice in these silences that turned it to remorse, and—love.

I wish you'd come to feel as I do, Hon. Try to. Write me that you will. I'm not your pal any more, but I am your friend. Good-by, old girl.

From a Happy Woman.

ADVENTURINGS *in* THE PSYCHICAL



VII—THE LAW OF DISSOCIATION



N the preceding article, it will be remembered, I rapidly reviewed certain phases of subconscious mental action that in one way or another have a beneficent bearing on human life. But, as I said in closing, there is another side to the story, and one of such extreme importance that it ought to be thoroughly understood by everybody.

The subconscious does not always exercise a helpful influence. On the contrary, it is frequently most destructive, bringing in its train disease, suffering, and even death. If, as we have seen, it possesses the power of contributing materially to our well-being, there are times when, unless its workings are comprehended and proper remedial measures taken, it may impose upon us indescribable misery.

It is able to do this by virtue of the intimate relations existing between the mind and the body. At this late day it is scarcely necessary for me to undertake to demonstrate that the state of one's mind has a great deal to do with the health of one's body. What is not so generally known, and what all of us ought to know, is the further fact that many diseases are directly due to distressing mental states, and in such cases usually to subconscious mental states—that is to say, to thoughts and emotions of which the sufferer consciously has no knowledge. The same often holds good even with regard to maladies the

symptoms of which are almost wholly if not altogether physical, and the causes of which one would naturally expect to find physical, likewise.

Indeed, ignorance of the tremendous rôle played by the subconscious in the causation of disease, has in the past been responsible for many medical shortcomings. Nor is the situation as yet much improved, although it is rapidly improving, thanks chiefly to the labors of a little group of scientific investigators known as psychopathologists, or medical psychologists, who have made it their special business to ascertain the different ways in which the subconscious may affect health adversely, and to devise methods for coping with mentally caused diseases.

These men are not "faith healers." They are not making any war on medicines. They are, in fact, themselves physicians, graduates of the best medical schools, of excellent standing in their profession, and seeking, above all things, to increase the usefulness and precision of medical science. Already, though their labors were begun only a few years ago, they have effected numerous cures of a seemingly miraculous character; but always they have effected them by utilizing natural laws which they have discovered by the rigorous processes of scientific experiment.

Of fundamental importance among these laws is one known as the law of dissociation. It might almost be called

the law of forgotten memories, for to a large extent its workings depend on the interesting circumstance, to which attention has previously been drawn, that ideas which have faded from the conscious memory persist in the subconsciousness. As Doctor Pierre Janet, the distinguished Frenchman and most eminent of living psychopathologists, has tersely phrased it: "Nothing that goes into the human mind is ever really lost."

No matter how remote, past experiences, as I have shown in earlier articles, can be recovered and recalled to mind by means of crystal vision, automatic writing, or other psychological methods of "tapping the subconscious." Obviously we have here no absolute loss of memory, but merely a splitting off, or "dissociation," from the field of waking consciousness.

Now, while the memories thus dissociated and lying hidden in the subconscious usually exercise no appreciable effect other than in the molding of character, the enlargement of our store of knowledge, etc., there are conditions under which, in the case of persons predisposed by circumstances of heredity or environment, they may give rise to all manner of mental and physical ills.

A person, for instance, experiences a sudden fright. Time passes, the fright is completely forgotten, or, at most, vaguely remembered. But one day unmistakable, and sometimes exceedingly peculiar, symptoms of disease appear. The victim, it may be, suffers from a strange obsession or "fixed idea," or from a general "nervous breakdown," or from an actual paralysis of some bodily organ, or from the development of abdominal or other enlargements resembling true organic growths.

Whatever the symptoms, the mechanism of the puzzling malady is always the same. There has been an abnormal dissociation. The ideas connected with the original shock, although submerged beneath the threshold of consciousness—in a word, forgotten—remain vividly alive in the subconscious, to act as perpetual irritants of the nervous system and to "suggest" the appearance of the

symptoms of which the sufferer complains. Often, indeed, the dissociation is instantaneous, and the appearance of the disease symptoms equally rapid.

In either case, the resultant malady is purely psychical in its origin, and can be cured only by psychical, not by physical means. What is needed is to get at the dissociated mental states—the forgotten, disease-creating memories—and reassociate them with the upper consciousness, or root them out completely by means of "counter suggestions" skillfully applied.

This is no fanciful theory. It is the solidest kind of fact, repeatedly tested and verified. Time and again, patients pronounced incurable by competent physicians have been taken in hand by the psychopathologists and, once their disease has been definitely traced to some dissociation, have been restored to perfect health.

There was brought one day to the Parisian hospital of the Salpêtrière, the world's greatest centre of psychopathological investigation, a woman of forty, designated in the medical record of her case by the name of Justine. She was accompanied by her husband, who explained that he wished Doctor Janet to examine her because he feared that she had become insane. And, in fact, she presented the aspect of a veritable maniac. Her jet-black hair was flowing loosely over her shoulders, her eyes were fixed and flaring, her hands trembling, the muscles of her neck twitching, and she constantly made the most horrible grimaces. When Doctor Janet gently sought to question her, she buried her face in her hands, and cried:

"Oh, it is terrible to live thus! I am afraid, I am so afraid!"

"And of what, pray, are you afraid?" the physician asked.

"I am afraid of cholera."

"Is that all you are afraid of?"

"But surely it is quite enough."

Doctor Janet turned for an explanation to her husband, who shook his head despairingly, as he replied in an undertone:

"This is the way she has been for years, doctor, only lately she has grown

much worse. She will scarcely eat anything, for fear of catching cholera. It is difficult to persuade her to stir from the house. She seems to think the air is full of cholera germs. She sees cholera in everything. Tell me, doctor, is my poor Justine mad? Must we be separated, she and I? Is it that she will have to spend the rest of her life in an asylum?"

"Leave her here a few days," said Doctor Janet, "and I can tell you better then."

Psychopathologists have invented some delicate tests for discriminating infallibly between true organic insanity, which in the present state of medical knowledge is quite incurable, and functional mental troubles due to dissociation. Applying these, Doctor Janet soon reached the conclusion that Justine was not really insane, and that her "phobia," or irrational fear, was due to some forgotten shock connected with the disease of cholera.

But, closely though he questioned her, she could recall nothing of the sort. He then decided to try the effect of hypnotizing her, for, as all psychopathologists are aware, hypnotism, when it is possible to use it, is an unrivaled agency for recovering lost memories. Put into the hypnotic state, patients easily remember incidents in their past of which they have no conscious recollection when in the normal, waking state. It was thus with Justine, who proved to be most hypnotizable.

"I want you," Doctor Janet told her, after she had passed into deep hypnosis, "to try and remember whether at any time in your life you saw a person suffering from cholera, or one who had died from cholera."

"Why, certainly I did," she promptly replied, shuddering violently.

"When was it?"

"When I was a little girl—fifteen years old."

"Tell me the circumstances."

"My mother was very poor. She had to take all sorts of work. Sometimes she nursed sick people, and when they died she got them ready for burial. Once two people in our neighborhood

died from cholera, and I helped her with the corpses. They made a frightful sight—one of them, at all events. It was the body of a man, naked, and all blue and green. Oh, frightful, frightful! What if I should catch the cholera? I shall catch it, I know I shall! Nothing can save me!"

Her voice rose in a shriek of terror, and Doctor Janet hastened to de-hypnotize her.

The situation was now perfectly clear to him. Evidently the sight of the corpse, "naked, and all blue and green," had so profoundly affected the impressionable girl as to cause a severe dissociation whereby all memory of the shocking episode had been blotted out of her consciousness, only to be subconsciously remembered in most minute detail.

To bring about a cure, to free her from the obsessing dread of cholera, it was necessary to remove the gruesome subconscious memory image, and Doctor Janet essayed to do this through suggestions given to her when she was again hypnotized.

"You insist," he said to the hypnotized Justine, "that you cannot help seeing in your mind's eye the corpse of the man who died. Very well, I have no objection to that. But hereafter you must see it decently clothed. So when it next appears to you, you will see it wearing a bright blue-and-green uniform, the uniform of a foreign military officer."

Happily, this suggestion "took," and Doctor Janet followed up his advantage by suggesting that the subconscious memory image which she regarded as that of a corpse was, in reality, the image of a living man. The suggestion likewise being successful, he set about getting rid of the idea "cholera," and its dire implications. Hypnotizing the patient as usual, he demanded:

"What is this 'cholera' that troubles you so much? Do you not understand that it is only the name of the fine gentleman in blue and green, whom you see marching up and down? He is a Chinese general, and his name is Cho Le Ra. Bear that well in mind."

Quite evidently there was nothing to inspire dread in the image of a picturesque Chinese officer, General Cho Le Ra. Little by little, as this artificial conception obtained firmer lodgment in Justine's subconsciousness, the baneful idea which it was intended to supplant faded away, and with its fading the abnormal fear diminished, until at length it entirely disappeared, greatly to her joy and the warm gratitude of her devoted husband.

Other psychopathologists, following Doctor Janet's lead, have similarly used this method of substituting one subconscious idea for another. Doctor John E. Donley, a well-known neurologist of Providence, Rhode Island, and one of the few psychologists whom the United States has yet produced, was once consulted by a young man of thirty-two, who said to him:

"Doctor Donley, I hear you have been very successful in handling people troubled with foolish notions. I'm bothered with as foolish a notion as any one could possibly imagine. I simply can't bear to ride in a street car with an odd number. Even-numbered cars give me no trouble at all, but if an odd-numbered car comes along, I've got to let it pass, no matter how great my hurry. My friends laugh at me, but I tell you it's no laughing matter. The thing has got on my nerves so that it is unbearable."

"How long have you been suffering in this way?" asked Doctor Donley.

"For years. Just when it began I can't remember."

"Is it only odd-numbered cars that affect you? How about odd-numbered houses, for instance?"

"No, no," answered the young man, "it isn't odd numbers in general. That doesn't bother me a bit. It's just when they're painted on street cars."

"H'm," said Doctor Donley. "Ever been in a street-car accident?"

"Never."

"Ever seen one?"

"Not that I remember."

"You are quite sure as to that?"

"Quite."

"Have you any objection to my hypnotizing you?"

"Not in the least, if it is likely to do me any good."

In another ten minutes the problem was solved. Doctor Donley from the outset had felt confident that the young man's "phobia" must be connected in some way with a street-car accident, and so it proved. Fourteen years earlier, when walking along the street, he had seen a car strike and seriously injure a child who unexpectedly came from behind a wagon. He had noticed at the time that the car bore the number two hundred and thirteen, and he remembered thinking to himself: "There is always bad luck in thirteen." The sight of the accident gave him a marked emotional shock, which, he said, upset him for several days.

All of this had long since passed from his waking memory, but was distinctly recalled during hypnosis. It was clear to Doctor Donley that the case was one of dissociation, and that the exciting cause of the young man's unreasonable dread of odd-numbered cars was based on a painfully vivid subconscious memory image of the consciously forgotten tragedy. Also, it was evident that before the dread could be overcome the distressing memory image would have to be eradicated.

To accomplish this, Doctor Donley resorted to the method of substitution, suggesting to the patient, while still under hypnotic influence, that he was quite mistaken in supposing that the street car had seriously injured the little girl; that, on the contrary, it had scarcely touched her.

The result, after only eight days' treatment, was effectually to replace the painful memory image with one free from distressing associations. As by magic, the young man shook off his absurd "phobia." No longer, when he had to take a car, did he stand on street corners, sometimes for an hour at a time, waiting anxiously for a car with an even number to appear.

Bizarre as these cases must seem, they are actually typical of a widespread malady that causes an amount of suf-

fering only appreciable by the sufferers themselves. In every land there are thousands of men and women afflicted with obsessions equally strange and equally distressing, yet amenable to treatment by the methods of psychopathology.

Often, in order to effect a cure, it is not necessary to make use of the round-about device just described. Direct suggestion—a strongly negative command imposed in the hypnotic state—is frequently sufficient.

Often, besides, it is not necessary to use hypnotism at all, a cure resulting if only the psychopathologist can dig down to the root of the trouble and, by recalling to conscious recollection the lost memory image, reassociate it with the rest of the contents of the upper consciousness.

Take, for example, another case successfully treated by Doctor Donley.

The patient, in this instance, was a woman of thirty-five, who came into St. Joseph's Hospital, in Providence, with which Doctor Donley is connected, complaining of a peculiar continually repeated and involuntary hacking, which sounded as though she were trying to clear her throat. Drugs, local applications, and electricity had been tried at intervals during more than four years, but to no purpose. On inquiry, it was found that the trouble had set in about five years before, when the patient, who was a mill hand, had suffered from a sore throat. The physician whom she then consulted told her that she had a bad attack of tonsilitis, and that her tonsils would have to be burned out.

Greatly frightened, she had hurried home, refusing to submit to the operation. In a few days the tonsilar symptoms disappeared, and she returned to work. But she was attacked a second time three weeks later, and visited another doctor, to be informed that her tonsils were so badly diseased that it would be well to have them removed by cutting.

Again she refused to submit to an operation, but the fear of cutting, added to her previous fear, now revived, of

burning out her tonsils, threw her into a highly nervous state. She then began to experience an unpleasant stinging, tickling feeling in her throat, which she tried to remove by hacking. As the tickling continued, the hacking became more and more frequent, and by the time she came under Doctor Donley's observation had taken on the character of a "tic," or uncontrollable muscular movement.

These facts in the early history of the case, the patient herself remembered only vaguely. But she confessed that she was still tormented by a haunting fear of a possible future burning or cutting of her tonsils. Finding her exceedingly suggestible, Doctor Donley made no attempt to hypnotize her. He merely requested her to close her eyes, remain perfectly passive, and listen attentively to him.

"I told her, with much emphasis," he said, in describing the treatment, "that her tonsils were perfectly healthy, that no cutting or burning ever was or ever would be required; that the tickling sensation in her throat arose from the constant fixation of attention upon this part; that she would feel no more desire to hack because her supposed reason for hacking had ceased to exist, and finally, that when she should open her eyes she would feel better than she had in a good many years.

"Much emphasis was placed upon this feeling of health, because it was desired to leave her on the crest of a pleasurable emotion, which of itself has a very great suggestive value. What had been predicted in her regard actually occurred. When she sat up, her tic had disappeared, and she expressed herself as feeling quite grateful and happy. The treatment lasted an hour, and except for two slight recurrences easily removed by waking suggestion, this patient has had no further difficulty."

Such rapidity of recovery, unfortunately, is comparatively rare, particularly when, as in this instance, a physical trouble is superadded to the mental. Often—a fact which cannot be emphasized too strongly—it happens that, in dissociational cases, physical symptoms

so far predominate as to lead to totally wrong diagnoses, even by experienced physicians. This results, as was hinted above, from the power inherent in subconscious "fixed ideas" of producing an endless variety of disturbances simulating true organic diseases, it may be diseases remedial only through surgical operations.

As a consequence, innumerable operations have been performed on patients who should have been given, not surgical but psychopathological treatment. It was only a few days ago that a case of the kind was called to my attention by a friend who participated in the lamentable affair.

A middle-aged woman entered one of the Boston hospitals and complained of severe abdominal pains, which she attributed to cancer of the stomach or intestines. She was obviously greatly frightened, and suffering intense agony. A diagnosis of appendicitis was made, and an immediate operation deemed imperative.

But, to the surprise of the surgeons, the appendix was found to be in a normal condition. At once they directed their attention to the other abdominal organs, examining them one by one. None showed any sign of disease. Finally, with a rueful smile, one of the surgeons straightened up, and, touching a finger to his head, said:

"The trouble with this poor woman, gentlemen, is here, not in the region that we have been exploring. But we should not undeceive her. We will remove the appendix, on general principles, and that will probably be all that is needed to cure the trouble in her head."

Under the circumstances, it was excellent advice. But how much better it would have been for the unfortunate, whose life was thus endangered by the surgeon's knife, if it had been recognized from the beginning that her malady was only a "hysterical simulation" of the symptoms of appendicitis. Some day, when physicians generally make themselves acquainted with the diagnostic methods of psychopathology, blunders like this will be most exceptional.

In point both of diagnosis and treatment, again, psychopathological knowledge is indispensable to the correct handling of such cases as the following, reported by Doctor Janet. It is, I am ready to concede, an unusual case, but it is unusual only because it presents a complex of symptoms commonly found singly or in simpler combination.

It would be impossible to estimate with any accuracy the number of persons who, afflicted only in scant degree, like this poor Marcelle, have been obliged to drag out an existence worse than death, either in the care of their friends or immured in an institution, simply because their medical attendants, ignorant of the workings of the law of dissociation, have been unable to fathom the true nature of their ills and adopt adequate curative measures.

Marcelle, as Doctor Janet calls her, was only nineteen years old when she began to astonish her relatives by developing what they were at first disposed to regard as nothing but an eccentric form of laziness. She would constantly ask them to give her objects—a book, her crochet work, a plate—which she could easily have got for herself by stretching out her hand and picking them up. To all expostulations, she would calmly reply:

"I can't help it. I can't use my hands as I once did, and that's all there is to it."

"You can't use your hands! What nonsense! You can use them to eat with, well enough, and you are crocheting most of the time."

"Oh, but that's different."

"What's the difference? Tell us."

But Marcelle could not, or would not, tell them, and from joking with her the family soon passed to a state of wrath, endeavoring in every way to overcome her "stupid obstinacy." Their anger in turn gave way to fear, when, one night, noticing a glimmer of light in her room, they entered, and found her standing, fully dressed, before the bed.

"But what is this!" they exclaimed, in amazement. "Why don't you get your clothes off and go to bed?"

"Because," she cried, "I can't undress!"

And, all argument proving vain, it was necessary for her sister to disrobe her as though she were a tiny child. Next day a consultation was held, and it was decided to take her to the Salpêtrière.

"She doesn't seem insane," her mother explained, when applying to have her admitted. "She talks sensibly about most things. Can it be that she is really suffering from some kind of paralysis?"

"Most assuredly," was the reply, "and we will do our best to discover what it is and cure it."

This turned out to be no easy matter. Doctor Janet, into whose care she came, had no difficulty in determining that the specific malady which afflicted her was an extreme form of "aboulia," a disease involving temporary paralysis of the will, and thereby preventing all muscular movement. But it was one thing to make a diagnosis, and another to effect a cure.

Presently, too, indications of mental disturbance developed. Doctor Janet had discovered that by distracting her attention he could induce her to rise, extend her hands, and perform other acts that were impossible to her when she concentrated her attention on them. He utilized this as an argument to try and persuade her that she could always control her limbs if she only made sufficient effort.

"But you are quite wrong," she calmly informed him. "I have not left my chair, I have not put out my hand."

"Most assuredly you have. You know very well I did not give you that piece of crochet work. How, then, does it come into your hands?"

"I did not pick it up."

"Who did, then?"

"Somebody else—somebody acting in me."

A little later, another complication. She refused to eat, and it became necessary to administer food to her forcibly. She kept saying to herself:

"You must die, you must die as soon as possible. You must not eat, you have no need of eating. You must not speak, you have no voice, you are paralyzed."

"Why do you say this?" Doctor Janet one day asked her.

"Why do I say what?"

He repeated her words.

"But I have said nothing of the sort."

"Oh, yes, you have."

"No, no, no—it was not I; it was somebody else acting in me."

Again that phrase—"somebody else acting in me." Greatly impressed, Doctor Janet threw her into deep hypnosis. Now, an unexpected and most pathetic passage of personal history came to light. A year before, Marcelle had had a secret love affair, her lover had deserted her, she had determined to commit suicide. Failing to do this, she had, none the less—overwhelmed by the shock of the desertion, and giving herself wholly to grief and chagrin, which she felt obliged to allow no one to perceive—gradually passed into a dissociated, dreamlike state, in which she subconsciously pictured herself to herself either as no longer existing or as about to perish.

Hence her "aboulia," hence the "somebody else acting in me," hence the refusal to take food. To Doctor Janet the situation was now almost as clear as the light of day—so, likewise, was the course which he would need to follow to restore the sufferer to her "real self," and rid her of all disease symptoms.

The dissociation, to put it briefly, had in this case been so complete as to cause an actual disruption of the sense of personality. Nor is this malady of "loss of personality" as rare as one might be tempted to think. I could mention many cases not unlike that of Marcelle's, and some far surpassing it in astounding developments. There is, for example, the singular case of B. C. A. But this is so remarkable, so weirdly fascinating, and so instructive that it deserves to be treated, as I shall treat it in my next article, entirely by itself.



THE PANTHER'S CUB

By

AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE

Fulvia La Marmora, nicknamed "The Panther" is about to make her first appearance in London as *Salome* under the auspices of her manager, Baron Robecq. She has a young daughter, Virginia, or Fifi, who has recently left school to join her mother. Fulvia falls in love with an English diplomat, Lord Desmond Brooke, to whom, however, the singer does not appeal, but he is much attracted by Fifi. Fulvia has no suspicion of the truth. The Marchioness of Sturminster, Lord Desmond's mother, becomes alarmed at her son's frequent visits to Madame La Marmora's villa, and commissions her son-in-law, Sir Joseph Warren-Smith, to find out how far matters have gone. Fritz Meyer, the singer's old repetiteur, arrives in London. He has a strong affection for Fifi, and is the only one of whom Fulvia stands in fear. Lady Sturminster discovers that it is Fifi, with whom Lord Desmond is infatuated, and induces a man named Scott, a dramatic critic, to tell him of an escapade of Fifi's at Como with a certain young man named Wentworth. Desmond believes it, but cannot conquer his love. Robecq desires to marry Fifi, and obtains her mother's consent. La Marmora finds out that it is Fifi, and not herself, to whom Desmond is attracted, and flies into an ungovernable passion of rage.

CHAPTER XIV.

RARELY had Mr. Scott spent so utterly enjoyable, so completely fruitful a day. He saw Sir Joseph safely off in his automobile—the latter departed in a glorious consciousness of accomplishment and success, in spite of the shock produced by the recent scene—and stood gazing after the swirling machine with a grin.

Then he turned and reentered the house. He had received no special invitation to remain; but with the Panther one need not stand upon ceremony. He was quite enough of an habitué to invite himself to dinner if he chose; and to leave the place without having seen the end of the comedy was not to be thought of.

Strolling back leisurely into the reception room, he found it deserted.

But shortly, with heavy step, Robecq appeared. He came slowly across the room; beheld Scott with a momentary glance of doubt, which was succeeded by one of resignation.

"I trust she's calmer," Scott remarked.

"Calm!" ejaculated the impresario.

"Oh, yes, deadly! She's getting ready for another."

"Another? You don't say so!" exclaimed Scott, endeavoring to keep the note of delight out of his voice.

Robecq looked at him philosophically. He knew his man; knew that he owed to him a good deal of the afternoon's work. But he could not afford to quarrel with him—Scott was a pestilential necessity.

"Is she coming down to dinner?" asked Scott.

"Oh, I believe so," was the impresario's answer, given with some testiness. "It's a kettle of fish, it's a confounded kettle of fish. And she's dressing herself. She's going to dress the girl."

"Eh?" Mr. Scott leaned forward.

"Miss Fifi's got to come down here, after dinner. Of course she's not to dine. And then, sir, I am to find her here, and to propose to her! I've got half an hour to do it in. And I've got to make her say yes. And then madame will come in upon us from the dining room with Lord Desmond, and the announcement will be made. Sir, that's the program!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Scott.

He stared for a moment; the situation was exquisite.

The next moment he rose, with a bland ejaculation; his hostess was sweeping into the room.

She had chosen to robe herself with a barbaric magnificence. A scarlet sheath, in the extreme of the current fashion, inclosed the long splendor of her limbs. Its exiguous draperies were clasped over her naked shoulders and at her breast with enameled bosses, gleaming with rough stones—greens, and purples, and reds. The celebrated emeralds were slung round her neck and blazed in her ears. Her copper-red hair, twisted with more simplicity and artistic negligence than usual, in a careless knot, was apparently only held in place by a dagger.

Passing by Robecq as if he did not exist, she bestowed upon her uninvited guest a dark look that pondered a second and then seemed to toss him aside.

He made way for her, and she took the couch with unconscious magnificence.

Silence was on the three. Robecq too wise to speak; Scott nonplussed, yet thrilled; and the singer absorbed. She sat with her eyes straight before her, gazing into her own thoughts, as the witch into the seething caldron.

All at once she spoke—her lips scarcely moving, her eyes still fixed:

"What hour is it?"

"Just about eight," answered both men.

They knew what she was waiting for; and in the heavy pause that succeeded, the critic's pulses quickened—he was nothing if not impressionable—when the faint throb of a motor began to grow into the silence. His eyes hanging upon the singer's face saw the flash kindle into that fixed, unnatural gaze.

Robecq got up and moved toward the colonnade as if the sense of suspense and impending event was beyond his endurance. But La Marmora sat on like a statue; and it was only when Lord Desmond was actually in the room that she moved at all.

He came in in his lounging, weary way, looking singularly distinguished in

the evening black and white beside the two other men in their morning suits.

She rose slow, long, superb, and stood awaiting the moment when his eyes should behold her.

It was for this moment that she had robed herself in gorgeous scarlet, had decked herself with jewels. Silent, arrogant, she challenged for the last time; she knew herself matchless in her own peculiar resplendence, and if he withstood now the voiceless surrender that yet was as defiant as a trumpet blast, she knew herself powerless forever.

In this brief pause the drama of her woman's life was acted out.

Deliberately the man's eyes swept round the room, seeking; they fell on her—and they grew blank. In her presence his only feeling was weariness; a weariness beyond her strength to stir into anything so active as hostility.

"Let us dine," said La Marmora, in that new, odd, harsh voice that seemed issued not for speech but for command. She swept down upon Lord Desmond; and he offered his arm. It was only upon the threshold of the dining hall that she spoke again.

"You shall see Fifi after dinner."

His drooping lids were suddenly raised. A moment he and she looked at each other. For a single moment, never to be repeated, soul sought and found soul, and knew it an enemy. Then convention dropped about the man; and her evil purpose caught the woman back to her deadly comedy of composure.

CHAPTER XV.

They were at dessert round the pseudo-Greek board. The impresario and the critic had labored to keep up conversation during the meal. Only a few words had the prima donna contributed. The diplomatist achieved a record of silence.

Now, with long naked arms propped each side of her neglected plate, La Marmora roused herself from far contemplation, to fix the man opposite to her, Scott. He was delicately peeling a peach.

"Ah!" she called out to him. "You

know you were not invited to dine here to-night."

He glanced up jocularly.

"Was I not, dear lady? Is it possible? How could I have made so agreeable a mistake?"

But there was no responsive smile in the set face of the hostess.

"You have such a sense of humor," she sneered. "It is not possible always to share it. Suppose, now, you were to rectify—this mistake of yours."

The baron's jaw dropped.

"My dear friend!" he remonstrated, after a gasp of horrified astonishment.

Mr. Scott also was gaping. The prima donna pursued, with that gathering fury in her voice which resembled a growl:

"Ah, do you take me for the kind of person that it is safe to play tricks on? Is my house to be made free with as if it were a restaurant? Do you walk in here to meet whom you will—suit your little games, smoke, drink, feed?"

But Scott had risen, and his action brought her to a standstill, breathing heavily through her dilated nostrils, and measuring him with glaring eyes as he advanced round the length of the table, toward her, in—considering the circumstances—a very creditable dignity.

"I trust, my dear lady," he began, and though his fat, pink face had grown pale, his voice remained urbane, "that if I have erred in construing a special into a general invitation, you will allow me to rectify my error, with all possible alacrity—only the privilege of kissing your hand, and a word of apology."

She motioned him from her. "No, no! No apology!" Whether intentionally or not, her angry gesticulation pointed toward the portière.

"If I may not speak, I can write," said the critic then, with a hissing breath.

His eyes met those of the baron; he waved his loosely hung hand toward that gentleman's countenance of despair, nodded at Desmond, and marched out of the room.

The manager struck his forehead.

"And he will write, too!" he groaned. "You will get an—apology—from him

—the morning after 'Salome,' my dear! To think," he proceeded almost tearfully, "that I have put up with Philip Scott for fifteen years, and that this is how we stand!"

"Ah, you make me tired!" said the singer.

Her manager flung upon her a single irate glance; then, in his turn, he rose suddenly.

"At least I am not out of my mind," he said, with more bitterness than he often allowed himself to betray. "You'll excuse me if I follow our poor friend."

"Oh, go, go!" she agreed, with a fierce little laugh. "And, by the same occasion, tell Fifi that we expect to find her waiting for us presently." She pronounced these words with significant emphasis, and added: "You needn't hurry back, Robecq."

The other, moving deliberately away, did not turn his head. Lord Desmond sat on, his eyes fixed on his plate. For the sake of that interview with Fifi, so strangely proffered, he was willing to sit on even an hour longer in the Panther's den; the more readily that the eyes turned upon him were, to-night, those of hatred.

A minute or two passed in heavy silence; and then the woman spoke:

"Have you got any cigarettes? Pass them to me. I will smoke."

He pushed his silver case across the table without a word, struck a match, and held it toward her.

But she, leaning suddenly forward, caught his hand with a grip and lit the cigarette thus. She drove her nails into his wrist as she clutched it. Then she puffed a cloud of smoke at him, and released him with a spasmodic gesture that was as savage as a blow.

"Why did you send me the lilies of the valley?" she asked.

He drew his cuff over the marks left on his wrist, took up a cigarette with long, pale fingers; and only after he had deliberately lighted it, answered:

"I did not send them to you."

Her breast heaved stormily, the great rough jewels flashing and darkening as they rose and fell.

"What!"

"I sent them to Mademoiselle Lovinska," he explained.

She dashed her cigarette from her, caught her throat with one hand as if she were strangling, and, with a supreme effort, restrained the cry of fury that was surging to her lips.

Desmond cast down his eyes. This was extremely tiresome and boring; but it was better than being smiled upon.

All at once she reached across the table again, this time only touching the back of his hand with a cold finger.

"You wrote: 'For Madame La Marmora' on your card," she said, under her breath.

He glanced at her. Her lips were distended in a dreadful smile. His blue eyes grew steely.

"I beg your pardon. I wrote: 'For Mademoiselle,' I meant the flowers for mademoiselle."

"Very well!" she said. "Very well!"

She clutched the curved arms of her classic chair with a fierceness that made each bone start.

"Very well," she repeated, in a fainter voice. "You will have occasion to send her more flowers by and by."

Almost for the span of a minute she sat in this tense attitude, her head craned forward, her eyes rending him; all the beautiful curves of throat and shoulders distorted. Then, once more fiercely mistress of herself—was it not worth while to wait for the moment of vengeance?—she fell upon his cigarette case and match box, turned out the whole contents on the table, and began to light and smoke one cigarette after the other, with an extraordinary swiftness and intensity.

The man lay back in his chair, patient, abstracted, determined. Again dead silence lay between them.

By the exit he had chosen Scott was obliged to cross the reception room on his way out of the house. Fifi, vainly endeavoring to concentrate her attention upon the "stupidest book she had ever read," glanced up, with a leap of the heart, to find that the entering figure displayed merely the rotundity, the close-cropped gray hair, the odious,

smirking face of the man she most disliked of all her mother's friends. Hers was an expressive countenance. The critic, approaching, met her glance of greeting with one that was nothing less than vindictive.

"Hello, Miss Fifi," said the intruder, after running her up and down with this malevolent scrutiny, "not gracing the dinner table, and you so beautiful!"

"And how is it," she cried, flushing, in her unlearned habit of schoolgirl retort, "how is it that you are no longer gracing the dinner table, and you so beautiful?"

He had a small laugh which would have made the blood of the sagacious baron run cold.

"I have been already quite sufficiently well entertained to-night, thank you, Miss Fifi. We critics, you know"—he waved his limp-wristed hands—"the servants of the public—the servants of the public! Ta-ta, my young friend!"

He blew her a kiss that was the acme of insolence.

The weighted portière was slowly settling down behind him when Robecq stepped into the room from the opposite side.

He came halfway across, then paused.

"Was that Scott?"

The girl nodded. Her under lip was slightly thrust forth; another tiresome person!

"Have you ever seen a pig in a rage?" she cried. "That's what that horrid little man looked like. What did you do to him?"

The impresario made no reply; he was reflecting. The mischief was done; to admit fear now, by vicarious apologies, would only be to intensify it. It is hopeless to try and caress back into good humor a poisonous reptile roused to anger; better stamp on it—safer still, get out of its path. The outer door was slammed upon his conclusion.

The poor manager smoothed over his careworn brow, and set himself with what courage he might to his desperate task. He advanced, smiling his genial smile, and sat down beside the girl,

who made room for him, not very graciously.

"Kitten well, Miss Fifi?"

Her face lit up immediately.

"Oh, such a darling! I left him asleep in the very middle of my bed. Do you know that his eyes are turning green?"

"They'll be orange, all right, in a month or so."

"Orange?" She dwelt on the thought with a delighted smile.

His glance mused on her. The mischief to keep a splendid creature like that in leading strings! Positively, "kittens" seemed the only subject upon which they could meet. He drove his fingers into his beard and began again:

"Had a good supper, Miss Fifi?"

The light died out of her face. The pouting mouth betrayed her sense of injury.

"Tea and a boiled egg."

"Too bad!"

After all, this was not such a bad start. The young, beautiful, slighted being edged closer to her only helper.

"Mamma is so strange to-night! She dressed me up like this, hours and hours ago. Said that I was grown up, quite grown up, and that I looked—well, rather nice! And then in the same breath says I'm not to come down till after dinner, and treats me as if I was two years old."

"Is that so?" said the listener, with emphatic sympathy.

He hesitated upon the advisability of taking her hand; but refrained.

"Nobody wants me," she went on, with a trembling lip.

"My dear little girl," he purred.

But she broke in again, all to her grievance, unheeding the motion of his arm behind her, the kindling of his gaze upon her.

"It's been a horrid day! Everybody is so cross, so odd!"

"I hope I've not seemed cross, or"—he gave a faintly nervous laugh—"or odd?"

She brushed the suggestion away with complete indifference.

"Oh, no, not you. I wasn't thinking of you. Eliza and—and—" The

name burning on her heart was the last she could pronounce. "Eliza and Fritz! And mamma! Mamma was odd. Quite, quite kind." She was unconscious of any irony. "But Fritz was horrid. He wants to have me sent away—to Germany! Oh, baron!" She flung out both hands to him. "Baron, don't let them! You'll stand up for me? Don't let them!"

He caught the impulsive hands and pressed them reassuringly, tenderly. Old Fritz was an unsuspecting ally indeed just now—Fritz, his most dreaded opponent.

"Ah—he wants to send you back to Germany, does he? That's too bad! No, no, we won't allow that."

"You'll stand my friend, won't you?" she pleaded, her dewy eyes widening upon him.

"Indeed I will, dear little friend."

The pressure of his clasp had become so ardent that, instinctively, she drew her hands away. Yet, absorbed in her trouble, she scarcely realized her own action. He was not displeased at the withdrawal; the sooner she regarded him as a man, and not a sort of a father, the better. He pursued what he thought his advantage.

"You're tired of always being treated like a child, aren't you?"

"You know I'm twenty-one."

The pent-up indignation of a long-felt injury flashed in her glance, resounded in her voice.

"Hush! Hush!" He put his finger on his lips. "We don't announce that quite so loud, do we? Your mamma's a little nervous to-night. The fact is, my dear Miss Fifi, you ought to be married—married, my dear. And then no one would dare to order you about."

"Married!"

A lovely carmine rushed to her face. She flung a fugitive look upon him—a look of shyness exquisitely hovering on happiness—then dropped her eyelids. Her heart was in a tumult. Was this old friend sent to prepare her? Lord Desmond was even now in the dining room. Perhaps discussing—She had learned abroad how parents arrange marriages first.

The baron was proceeding:

"You would do just as you liked. It would be better than going to Germany, wouldn't it?"

The reminder stung her into mingled scorn and fear.

"Germany! In the farmhouse, with Fritz's old sister! Oh! I'm likely to be married there, am I not?"

"You've only got to say the word, and you shan't go to Germany."

"Oh, baron, you'll—you mean—" She checked herself. Again embarrassment seized her. She laughed, confused, blushing. "I don't know. I don't know."

"Ah, but I know. My little friend, you—"

He took her hand, with a soft gesture; and as it lay inert in his, the ardor of his pressure grew again.

"My little friend would like to be married, to have a home of her own, to have some one to order about instead of being ordered about herself."

The flushed face was turned with a quick movement of astonishment upon him, the golden-hazel eyes were startled from their shy dream. But he was carried away.

"Some one who would do all she wants," he was urging amorously, "always, always! Who would give her as much money to spend as she liked—dresses, jewels, pearls! Pearls, Miss Fifi, for that long, beautiful throat! A great immense rope of pearls—"

Her hand was struggling in his like an imprisoned bird; her glance fluttered uneasily from his gaze. She had never seen the baron look like that. She hardly knew what it meant, but it both offended and terrified her.

"I don't understand," she faltered.

He could not stop himself now. Ever more closely he held her; ever more ardently proceeded:

"Wouldn't you like pearls? They needn't prevent diamonds! Fifi, one word. Come, you are not afraid of me, are you? Won't you be my little baroness?"

Utter amazement robbed her for the moment of all power to struggle.

"You! You!"

"Even myself.

"You—want to marry—me?"

"More than the whole world!"

She freed herself with sudden strength. Then the tension of her multiplied emotions culminated in a burst of hysterical laughter.

"Me? You! I marry you! Oh, good gracious!"

A second or two he contemplated her, and the look that had frightened her in his eyes deepened into something approaching ferocity. The most spiritual man is doubled with the brute. The baron was not spiritual.

"Do you prefer Germany? Exile to the farmhouse of Fritz's old sister? Or some other school or institution where you'll be kept till all your youth is gone? I tell you I can't fight for you unless you are my wife. I'm powerless, between your mother and Fritz, unless you are my wife. Oh, you laughed at the bare idea—laugh away! We shall laugh together by and by, my beauty!"

He caught her round the waist.

The black fear with which she had heard him expound the situation, had felt its stabbing truth, was succeeded by a blind panic of revolt as his touch encircled her.

"Let me go; let me go!"

"One kiss, first!"

"Let me go!" she panted, and then screamed. The piercingness of her cry drove them apart like a sword.

"How dare you?" She had leaped to her feet, and stood, scorning him; beautiful like some young Valkyrie in her storm of outraged maidenliness. "How dare you touch me, you horrible old man? How dare you think you can buy me, with your pearls, your jewels? I, marry you! The very sight of you makes me sick!"

The language was that of a school-girl; but the resentment that dictated it was all a woman's.

The baron sat motionless, staring before him.

Man is so made that the tenser the emotion, whether of the senses or of the spirit, the more rapidly it passes. Of its own violence it dies. Rueful, ashamed, the manager felt his heat of

passion subside; and he looked only on his own folly.

"And this is what comes of mixing pleasure and business!" he thought.

Fifi's cry pierced into the dining hall and struck the two who sat there. La Marmora dropped her cigarette, and sat listening for one moment of keenly arrested attention, nostrils widened, brows contracted, her glance sideways flung. Lord Desmond leaned forward and fixed her. That was Fifi's voice! What was happening there within? The Panther knew.

Both unconsciously waited for a second call; but half a minute passed, and still there was silence—a silence that became sinister, unendurable to the man. He rose and impulsively hastened toward the archway. His hostess overtook him as he lifted the portière and brushed out before him, almost flinging the silk folds back in his face, as if to exclude him.

He saw, with a vague wonder, as he disengaged himself, that his hands were trembling.

At sight of her mother, Fifi sprang down from the dais toward her, and then brought herself up short. She cast one swift look from the singer's face to that of Lord Desmond, and back again; and stood, head upflung, with fluctuating color and fingers nervously interlaced—a creature at bay.

La Marmora had halted, too. Now she bore down on Robecq.

"Well?"

The single word rang out like the crack of a whip. Robecq shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah!" The singer drew in her breath; then, gutturally, in a voice that seemed to rise straight from those hidden depths of vulgarity in her soul: "What's the meaning of this?" she fulminated.

Once again the impresario shrugged his shoulders, with ever so slight a gesture toward the motionless figure of Lord Desmond. A moment he sought to catch the diplomatist's eye—to convey a warning, a reassurance, as if he

said: "Do not attach any importance to this little scene. Singers are impossible creatures—who should know it better than I? Only let us remain normal!" Then he got up, and advanced to his troublesome property; the old, good-humored, deliberate, resigned Robecq.

"My dear friend, there's nothing to agitate you. Miss Fifi is a little startled. Your humble servant has been duly snubbed. Give us all time—a little more time!"

His words, well meaning as they were, roused the girl to a renewal of panic.

"Mamma! Mamma!" she cried, high-voiced. "He talks of marrying me! Me!"

The mother turned like a viper.

"Well?"

She caught the arm that had been outstretched in appeal, so savagely that the baron instinctively sprang forward.

"Let me alone!" she hissed at him.

Then her last remnant of self-control gave way. She had prepared a sensation, and it had failed. But vengeance was not relinquished. All the baseness in her poured in remorseless fury and hatred from her lips.

"My word! What do you expect, I should like to know! You little fool! To what do you aspire, I wonder? What do you think you were allowed out of the schoolroom for? What do you think I burdened myself with you for all these months? Who are you, what are you, to set yourself against your mother? Ingrate! Your mother! Hold your tongue, Robecq! I will manage this! Come! Here is her hand."

"Mamma! Oh, no, mamma!" Fifi struggled against that grip in vain; then flung her free hand over her eyes. Before Lord Desmond she was ready to die of shame.

"It is yes—it is yes! I tell you it is yes!" The mother had an atrocious mirth in her throat. "Here, take her hand, baron!"

And he was standing by, without a word!

"I won't!" screamed the girl, pushed beyond the limits of endurance. "I

never will! Ah, you think I don't understand. I know why you want to marry me off!" She fought to disengage herself, and with a supreme wrench succeeded. "I know why you want to get me out of the way."

She did not know what she was saying.

"Ah, be quiet, you silly child!" whispered Robecq, in her ear.

In vain he remained "normal"! Abnormal passions were at work, and the drama swept by him, beyond his power to control. As well might a man strive to stem a flood with the sluice gate of the roadside stream.

"You want to get me out of the way," repeated the girl, in her high, strained note, that rang close upon tears. "I can't help being young! I can't help growing up! I can't help people liking me!"

Whether intentionally or whether with a mere instinct of seeking for help from the quarter she most yearned to receive it, here she turned and sought Lord Desmond with her eyes. The Panther caught the glance; and with a sharp cry of rage, that snarl in her throat, with which the baron had been ominously acquainted once or twice before, she struck her child on the cheek.

"My God!" The baron was the only one of the four who called out. Fifi stood as if turned to stone, her head raised; on her countenance the mark of the blow began to flame.

La Marmora was crouching, in the attitude in which she had struck.

Desmond, suddenly gray-faced, still made no movement, until Robecq flung an imperative gesture toward him, bidding instant departure. Then he looked once at Fifi, once at the Panther—the extreme of passion and the extreme of loathing were in those two glances—and slowly turned and walked from the place; not through the archway that led into the hall, but through the open columns of the terrace. He was pursued by different sounds; a long, throbbing, hysterical cry from La Marmora, as she sank into Robecq's arms, and from Fifi's lips, laughter!

Out of the girl's outraged heart, this

dreadful laughter sprang. Tears were too sacred and too healing to be granted to such an injury as hers.

Without more ado, the impresario hustled the writhing woman out of the room. In sheer humanity he could not leave the Panther to maltreat her cub any more; besides this, the commercial instinct was once more asserting itself. It had indeed been a disastrous evening for him; but prompt action might still save his investment. The first thing was to put a stop to the damaging shrieks, any one of which might be fatal to that golden asset—*Salome's* voice.

"You will do this once too often, my dear," he had said in Vienna. If he had had a bottle of chloroform to his hand he would have been capable of smothering her with it that moment!

CHAPTER XVI.

Desmond went deliberately down into the syringa walk. It was damp and chill after the rain—but the perfume was intoxicating. Here he had planned, by some means or other, to stray with his nymph that night; to grasp, without regard to the future, some hour of entrancement, some exquisite dalliance with the infatuation that was consuming him.

When he had formed this resolution, he had been once again under the spell of the temptation that bade him gather at least a memory for the rest of his life. A kiss, and a farewell. Or a kiss, and after that the deluge! What did it matter?

But now all was changed; he carried down with him an image that seemed to go visibly, lit by flame, beside him. No longer his nymph, but a creature with head flung back and eyes at bay; hung with mock brilliants that glittered and trembled like a fiery spray with the beating of her heart, with the panting of her breath. A creature in the very flower of her young womanhood, with exquisite naked shoulders and arms, and feet arched like those of a goddess, exposed by that ill-fitting finery of sweeping satin. A helpless thing; frail,

most piteous! The virginal woodland thing no longer, alas, but only Fifi, the Panther's Cub!

His mind had been made up, he told himself, from the moment her cry had pierced to his ears; it was a cry for help. It was a cry for him! What he could give her he would give.

It was almost with a light step that he sprang up the grass stairs once more. Now, he had merely the detail of his action to settle, and the first move was to see Fifi alone.

He halted in the shadow and listened. All was silent. At least the fantastic marble hall had this advantage; it held no secret, either of sight or sound, from the garden these summer nights.

Empty! Was it empty?

He came up the slope with caution. He must find some way of communication with his poor girl at once; if necessary, bribe, or coax, or demand—he felt reckless enough for anything.

Something like a moan floated out upon the delicate peace of the air. His heart contracted, and then burned. What were they doing to her?

With a leap he bounded up the marble steps, and, dazzled by the flood of light, halted on the threshold and shaded his eyes to look. Then those steady pulses seemed to stop. She was there.

Prone on the couch she lay, her golden head abased. It was the attitude of one broken, despairing. She scarcely seemed to breathe. It was not from her that the sound of lament had come to him. One would as soon have expected a lily beaten down by the storm to cry out. Yes, a flower cast upon the earth, she was that!

He came nearer and called her. He would not touch her.

"Fifi!"

She shuddered; slowly lifted herself and turned to him. Her eyes, darkly encircled, looked abnormally large. The rouge which Eliza had put on with no sparing hand mocked the ashen pallor of one cheek; the other—as she felt his gaze upon her, her whole countenance grew scarlet—she raised her hand to shelter that infamous mark from him.

An overwhelming pity mingled with his passion.

"May I sit down beside you?" he said very quietly, and took the space she made for him, carefully keeping himself apart from her.

She drew herself still closer to the head of the couch.

No, no, he did not love her—there was nothing but compassion in his eyes. And she would not have his compassion.

"I'll run away! I'll not stay here any more!" Her breast heaved. Bitter, defiant words dropped from her lips. "I'm the most unhappy creature on the face of this earth, but I'll stand it no longer. I'll run away!"

"Indeed?" Forcibly he kept his voice in those measured tones. "And where will you go? What will you do?"

"Plenty of places I can go to! Plenty of things I can do!" she went on, stung to a wilder vehemence. "That much, at least, I've learned in this house! I'm not a fool. I know I'm not ugly. Why shouldn't I sing, like mamma, or dance, or act? But I won't do what they want! I won't!" She turned the pitiful, disfigured beauty of her countenance upon him. "I won't marry that dreadful old man. I hate him! I loathe him! And I won't be buried in Germany—that's what Fritz wants. I won't be imprisoned again; I'm grown up, I'm a woman, I've got my life to live. Why should I marry? Why shouldn't I live my life? I'm not a fool or a baby."

A sob rose, strangling, in her throat.

"Anybody would be kinder to me than they are here. I will live my life!" she cried. And a second dry sob rent her.

"Panther's Cub," said the man, under his breath. Then in another moment he had her in his arms. His voice—low, troubled, hoarse—was in her ear.

"Well, I'm better than Robecq! I'm as good as the theatre! At least I can take you out of this!"

She could not answer him, the surprise was too great, the relief too exquisite. But the tears came raining down her cheeks. She let all her young body relax into his embrace; it was a surrender as complete as her trust.

His lips were on her outraged face. He felt her tears upon them with an indescribable tearing of the soul.

All that love could give her she should have! Oh, for that blow, that had given her to him, how she should be loved!

A moment, in his headlong impulse toward her, he was poised on the mad project of carrying her away with him, then and there. But he glanced at her face, marred, stained with tears and smudged with rouge—quivering, so tired, so young, and through all so lovely to him!—and some unknown depth of tenderness in his nature awoke.

She must recover herself, she must rest, she must do this thing with due deliberation. He could not take advantage of her desolateness, nor of this first moment of awakened love.

"Can you trust yourself to me, then?"

Trust him! Her eyes answered for her. Her trembling, dumb lips! Those lips! He had not kissed them yet. Not yet!

"Then, listen," he said, taking both her hands. "I will come for you to-morrow. If I come for you to-morrow, will you let me take you away?"

A sigh, an indefinable movement of yielding toward him; and again, voicelessly, he was answered.

"To come away with me! To be mine, to let me care for you! To be my love for as long as you can love me, for as long as I can make you love me! Fifi, you understand it will not be a slight and passing thing? Oh, I think I shall want you—always!"

CHAPTER XVII.

Fifi looked round the room in which she found herself momentarily alone with a sense of awakening from a bewildered dream—a curious sense of chill, attributable to no salient cause, unless perhaps the fatigue which seemed suddenly to have come upon her, and the unexpected dinginess of the hotel, which Lord Desmond had chosen for their halting place at Dover.

This was their sitting room. Here

they were to spend their first evening together! A single electric light, with brutally unshaded loop, flung into relief every prosy detail of the surroundings; the huge pattern of the morris paper, the chiffonier with its cheap veneer, the lopsided sofa, the armchairs in saddlebag velvet, with their lace antimacassars starched and blue-tinted, as were also the insufficient curtains that veiled, without concealing, the green venetian blinds of the bow window.

"What a horrid, horrid room!" thought the girl.

The bare, painted boards and the picturesque simplicity of a German wayside *Gasthof* she had known, and found pleasing, on many a summer holiday with Fritz. She had known also the cushioned luxuriousness of those hotels patronized by the great prima donna. But this? This—she could find no word for it. She was too inexperienced in English travel. To her, Biddicombe's Marine Hotel was merely hideous.

She laid, after some deliberation, the basket she had been unconsciously clutching, behind the sofa, and loosened the strings of her motor veil. Then, becoming more distinctively aware of the closeness of the room, charged with many strange and musty smells, she turned to the window. As she did so the sound of the sea for the first time asserted itself upon her ears. Hastily she drew up the clattering blind and opened the window.

Leaning against the window sill, her thoughts wandered. Already the dawn of this day, when she had gone forth from her home forever, seemed immensely distant; already this irretrievable step seemed to have cut her off completely from her past life.

She tried to recall, in orderly manner, the events of the day; they slid before her mind, melting one into another, like the gliding pictures of a magic-lantern show. The swirling passage through the veiled loveliness of the early morning; from dew-spangled hedgerows, still and shadowing trees, long vistas of fields all bathed in silver sheen and hung with mists of pearl, to the first ugly outskirts of great London,

to the rattle, the sordidness, the dismal streets.

Lord Desmond had driven the car himself. He had had very few words for her from the moment when he had helped her to step up beside him to the moment of their first halt at the big hotel, the name of which she did not even know. There he had left her for many hours. She did not think it unkind of him, for he had explained to her, as they went, why it was best. He was known in London; she was not.

It had, of course, been impossible for her to bring luggage out of Branksome; nothing but a small closed basket which she carried as she stole down through the shrubberies to the corner of the road where he awaited her. He could not, either, take her himself to shop; but it would be quite easy to order the little she wanted, by telephone, from one of those big establishments which provide for universal wants.

"Once in Paris," he had said, his blue eye upon her, "you shall get everything, everything!"

That glance of his was decking her, as he spoke, with the lavishness of love. Just now she must content herself with some little boxful that would fit on the motor. But she could get many things sent up on approval, and amuse herself—in choosing all she required—for a couple of hours. It would have to be at least a couple of hours before he could fetch her again, for he also had business to dispatch.

And, after all, the time had not hung too heavily in the smart sitting room in the grand hotel; for it had all been rather thrilling—first the ordering by telephone, and then the selection of the pretty things, of which a bewildering display was brought for inspection.

A pleasant chambermaid had helped her. And, by and by, when after a lonely meal she had been beginning to turn restlessly about the room, hearkening for the sound of his step along the muffled corridor, the arrival of three parcels, not of her own ordering, proved an agreeable diversion. A little dressing case with gold fittings, a box of chocolates, and a novel.

She was child enough to love a present for its own sake—woman enough to linger over what was to her eyes a bridal gift; schoolgirl enough still to find chocolates and a novel a very good pastime. It was a gay and dashing story of romance in a motor car—and she was plunged in the second chapter when Lord Desmond walked in upon her.

He had given her no time even to thank him; he was bent on haste. They were to dine at Canterbury, he told her, and catch the evening boat for France.

So, while he saw her new little box and her bag taken down, she had been veiled again by the good-natured chambermaid, had received back from her the precious basket, and, with a dream-like feeling strongly upon her again, found herself seated once more in the car—once more dashing toward her wonderful future, through streets and squares and desolate suburbs, out into the green fields again. This time a chauffeur, carapaced like a shining beetle, drove; and she and Desmond sat together.

That was a wonderful afternoon. After a while she lifted the smothering folds of tissue before her face. It was against her instinct to do anything secret, and she loved to feel the wind blowing against her cheeks. The knowledge of his presence beside her was bliss. Once or twice, indeed, she had a kind of vague disappointment that he had not once held her to his heart, like last night; that even now he should not fold an arm about her or even hold her hand. But she explained it to herself very sapiently; until they were married he could not—and she supposed, nay, she felt quite certain it was not safe that they should be married in England. Until they were married! She knew, through her English novels, that when English people were engaged to be married it was usual for them to kiss and to embrace; but she also knew that this was not the custom among foreigners, and doubtless she was a foreigner—and that was why he was thus careful of her position; why he was so pressed with desire to get her across the water.

So she had talked to herself, silencing the little questioning voices as they woke within her.

Upon this point in her reflection Lord Desmond entered the room. He carried her new traveling bag in one hand, and, depositing it on the table, came over to her. His motor cap, pushed at the back of his head, gave a rakish look to his face that was quite unusual to it. But there was a haggard anxiety in his eyes.

"Well, my dear," he said, with an effort at joviality, likewise singularly foreign to his usual manner, "dreaming out into the night? Come away from the window. Why, it hasn't even a view of the sea! Well, this is a hole!" he continued discontentedly, as, clinging to his arm, she turned back into the room with him. "I'm sorry to have so mismanaged things. If that tire hadn't burst we'd have caught the boat right enough. Though I'm afraid we ran it rather fine." He took off his cap and flung it on the table, then smiled at her. "We dawdled a bit at Canterbury."

"Oh, I can't be sorry for it," she interrupted, "it was lovely! It was, oh, so—" She made an expressive gesture with both hands, in her impulsive, un-English way. "Oh, that church! I did not know churches over here could be so beautiful."

The man's gaze, as it rested upon her, grew puzzled.

"That—church, as you call it, is that what you liked?"

"The church!" She laughed; her spirits were rising; the intoxicating dream feeling was coming back upon her. "The church, yes, and the rest. Our dinner in the queer little inn. And what you said to me when you drank my health, and what you said to me about my eyes! And that once, when you took my hand across the table, as the waiter went out of the room."

She was pulling her hat and veil from her head, as she spoke, crimsoning in an adorable manner under the loosened hair. Her eyes, dewy with unshed tears, her lips all smiles.

No, he thought as he brooded upon

her; no, he did not regret. Not for a moment!

"You have spoiled me," she went on. It was absurd, she had not found courage yet to call him by his name. Engaged people were not on such formal terms. He would think her cold. "Desmond!" she cried, and the effort lent a loud assurance to the word. "You are kind to me! I have never been spoiled like this before!"

"You shall always be spoiled now." He caught her to him as he spoke. "I did not mean our first evening to be spent in a sordid place like this. But I didn't dare take you to a big hotel, Fifi—" His voice had sunk to those low, husky accents, which had held such passion in her ears last night.

"No?" she questioned as he paused.

"There will be a hue and cry, you know," he went on, releasing her, for there were steps on the landing without.

She nodded to him with an air of portentous wisdom.

"Of course; of course."

Then she slipped out of her motor coat and ran to the window.

"What does it matter about the room? One can hear the sea."

"To-morrow we shall be across that sea!" he said, his deep glance following her.

There was a knock at the door, and sharply he turned and cried:

"Come in!"

The little, shabby, heated German waiter propelled himself head foremost into the room, bearing poised on one hand a tea tray, on the other a large, greasy, leather-bound volume, both of which he slid onto the table with the skill peculiar to his order.

"Will mister and madam kindly write names?"

The girl came back with a spring.

"Oh, I will—I will!"

She had the book spread open before her and was plunging the dusty pen into the muddy ink before Lord Desmond had sufficiently collected his wits to intervene.

"Better let me, my dear," he said, bending over her.

But she squared her elbows, childishly fending him off.

"No, no! Let me!"

Then, with pen in the air, she began to read out, as if nothing could be of deeper interest to her:

"Mr. and Mrs. Altamount Smith, Palmerston, Blackheath. I wonder if they are bride and bridegroom. Mr. and Mrs. Percy Fitzroy Hodson, 203, Penywern Road, W. Do you think they are bride and bridegroom?"

She flourished the pen and began to write; Desmond, reading over her shoulder, suddenly snapped it from her hand.

"Get up. I'll write!"

His voice rang out harshly. She looked, startled, half frightened; saw his frowning face, and rose without a word, biting her lip.

He took the seat she had vacated. With great care he obliterated the couple of words she had begun, and wrote himself. From where she stood she could see the page as he lifted his hands from it and dropped the pen. A loud, involuntary exclamation escaped her:

"Oh!"

He rose with unnecessary noise, and cast a single glance upon her warningly. Slowly she went then back to the window, and leaned her head against the casement as before, staring out into the night.

The waiter, with his neck craned and his hopeless eye fixed on a corner of the ceiling, as etiquette taught him, stood in patience till the gentleman would be pleased to let him depart with his book. He had seen many brides and bridegrooms, German and English; and their skirmishes had ceased to interest him.

Desmond blotted the inscription with the much-used square of blotting paper, and handed back the folio.

"Thank you, sir," said the alien, and fled from the room.

At the closing of the door, Fifi wheeled round.

"Why did you write that? We are not Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Brown!"

Her voice shook.

"Good heavens!" he returned. "Why, you made my hair stand on end! Miss Fifi—mercifully I caught you at the Fifi. Miss Fifi Lovinska, no doubt. And underneath, no doubt also, you'd have written: Lord Desmond Brooke."

"Of course. Why not?"

Her cheeks were flaming.

"Well, in England," said the man, and hardly knew that a note almost of anger had crept into his voice, "people don't give themselves away like that; at least not the class of people I belong to."

"But it isn't," she argued, feeling that she must argue or burst into tears, "it isn't as if you could keep it a secret. All the world is bound to know—all the world, my people, your people in the course of the next two days—that I, Fifi Lovinska, and you, Lord Desmond Brooke, have run away together!"

He stared at her as if he were hardly sure of her meaning; and his puzzled expression became intensified to trouble.

She went to the tray, and, with a slightly trembling hand, began to pour herself out a cup of tea.

"Oh, dear, I'm so thirsty! You would make me drink that glass of champagne at Canterbury, and I hate it."

As she spoke, she found his arm round her again; and happiness once more stole over her inarticulate sense of discomfort.

"It was to toast our life together," he pleaded, with his lips upon her hair.

With ineffable content, she carelessly rubbed her head against his shoulder, sipping her vile tea. Suddenly she felt him shake a little, and she glanced up.

"Why are you laughing?"

"Because you are such a true Panther's Cub," he told her.

She gave a faint cry, and started from him, putting down her cup.

"Oh, what a horrid name!"

But he drew her back.

"Don't move! Are we not well like this? You see, Fifi, you've just taught me a lesson in philosophy. Why should one ever hide anything one has made up one's mind to do? You know, my beauty—what delicious hair you have!"

—you know that I was beginning to have almost a kind of remorse!"

She turned her head lazily, under his caress.

"Why?" she murmured. He was right, she was very well like this.

"Why?" he echoed. "Because you are so young still."

"Not too young for love."

And, at that, she smiled broadly, and then hid her face, because of the boldness of her speech.

He repeated the words after her, a mingled ecstasy and pain in his voice.

"Not too young for love! Ah, Fifi, and I was wondering all day whether I should not have done better to leave you to your mother's matrimonial projects—such as they were."

She disengaged herself, with the odd little air of wisdom which she had adopted since the great event.

"You'd better have a cup of tea," she began parenthetically. And then, with a sudden, half-mocking, half-shy glance from the lustrous golden-hazel eyes: "And, if I happen to prefer our matrimonial project, what, then, sir?" She was offering the cup, as she spoke.

"Our—" He checked himself upon that single sharp word.

"Such as it is." She mimicked his phrase with a gay laugh.

Laughter was upon him, too, as he took the cup.

"Such as it is." There was relief in his air, a new ease in his tone. "Quite so. Mr. and Mrs. Brown, Fifi?"

A moment it seemed as if he was bending to kiss her. But another swift change of mood came upon him. He frowned, took a step away, and laid down his cup.

"Don't you like your tea?" said the girl anxiously. "Oughtn't I to have put in the sugar? Fritz always says I'll never know how to manage a house. But I'm going to learn from you when we are married, when—"

Her eyes were cast down as she made her little humble speech, and she did not see his start or the wild glance he flung at her. She went on, halting prettily upon coquettishness: "When I'm Mrs. Brown."

The man passed his hand over his forehead. Again a kind of wonder and trouble fought in his countenance with what was anger, almost disgust. Then, as if with an effort, he flung these conflicting feelings from him, and, coming up to her quickly, caught her by both hands.

"Oh, my dear, we are neither of us very good, are we?"

Pain was piercing through the renewed ardor of his voice. Fifi dropped her head. She could not hide the torturing crimson that rushed into her face.

"I don't know," she faltered. "I think you are good."

"Alas!" he went on, the pain growing deeper in his accents, and a new note, that of tenderness, gathering to it. "We have both done those things which we ought not to have done, have we not?"

She winced. He went on hurriedly: "We are not exactly being good now, are we, sweetheart?"

"You mean," she said faintly, "because we've run away?"

"I mean—because we've run away. Well, you've taught me a lesson just now, as I told you. And you need not rub that Mr. and Mrs. Brown hypocrisy into me any more. You are just Fifi—the Panther's Cub—an untamed thing that cannot lie. And I am just Desmond Brooke, who loves you! Kiss me and tell me—is not that the way between us?"

But, with her young sunburned hands pressed against his shoulders, she held him from her. And still with bent head, speaking with difficulty:

"I want to be truthful," she murmured, then paused. "You said—"

Again speech became too difficult. But yet she was determined; and, lifting her lovely crimsoned face:

"It is true," she blurted out, "I have not always done what is right."

"Hush, hush, for Heaven's sake! We'll take each other as we are. Hush! Oh, Fifi, what does it matter? Wild things of the woods mate where they please, and ask no sanction. We'll go away together, you and I— How you look at me, you untamed thing! I

don't want to tame you, Fifi. It is you who shall teach me freedom."

Her eyes were indeed fixed upon his face with a dilating intensity. Lovely, startled, she hung on his words! Could he but have guessed it, the fascination that held her was as much that of a terrifying mystery as of a passion shared! He caught her by the shoulders.

"How beautiful you are! Ah, I was dead. I am alive again! I am alive, Fifi! Some of your quick blood has got into my veins. What indeed should you want with wine? You are intoxication in yourself. Oh, if I were a rich man, how I would set off your beauty! You should have a crown of diamonds to shine on your hair; diamonds to run like a fire round your throat—your beautiful throat. Fifi—kiss me!"

Into her wide eyes the terror had been growing. She gave a cry—even such a cry as that which had pierced to his ears last night in the marble dancing hall.

"Let me go! You frighten me!" She tore herself from his slackening grasp, and ran from him to a corner of the room, cowering. "I want to go home! I want Fritz!" she moaned, and then burst into an agony of sobs.

"Fifi!" He stood, blasted. Then, in a completely altered voice: "Fifi!" he cried again, and went halfway across the room toward her. He stopped and stared at her as she clung, sobbing, to the wall. And at last, speaking as if to a child, "Fifi!" he repeated.

She turned her face. The tears were streaming down it.

"Oh, Lord Desmond!"

It was more piteous to his sight even than that berouged, stricken visage of last night.

"For God's sake," he exclaimed, "don't cry like that! What is it?"

She drew back closer to the wall.

"You frightened me!"

"I don't frighten you—now?"

His own voice shook. He came nearer, hesitating; took her hands with an infinite gentleness.

"I don't frighten you now?" he asked again.

"No," she said, on the catch of a sob, "not now."

She allowed him to lead her to the sofa, to press her down upon it; then he stood back from her.

"Will you try and tell me why I frightened you?"

His manner was still painstakingly gentle; still the manner a man would use to a terrified child. She broke into a fresh passion of weeping.

"You were so strange. I had never seen you look like that. Oh, you looked at me—your eyes! You spoke—you were like the baron!"

"The baron!" he cried loudly.

"Yes." She shuddered. "Last night—when he wanted—to kiss me!"

She buried her face in the dusty sofa cushions. Desmond stood rigid, convicted. There was a long silence. In a smothered voice, scarcely raising her head, at length she spoke.

"Are you angry?"

Harshly he questioned in his turn:

"Why did you come away with me?"

She dropped her head again.

"I—you were so different from the others." She was shaken by a great sigh. "I felt so safe with you!"

Once more the convicted silence.

"Well, there's no harm done," he cried suddenly. "I will take you back."

She started, dashed the tears from her eyes.

"Take me back!" she echoed pitifully.

He bent to her.

"You don't want to go back?"

Biting her quivering lip to keep back the sobs, she shook her head.

"What, then?" he asked, and the impatience of an extreme pain was in his tones. Helplessly the sobs overcame her.

"Don't be angry with me! You are not like the baron. I don't know how I could have thought it. Don't take me back! I will try—I will try—I will be a good wife to you."

The man fell back two steps as if struck by an invisible hand. Then, coming forward again, he took her head between both his hands—miserably conscious of her wet, burning cheeks

against his palms—and looked piercingly into her eyes; looked until her plaintive, appealing, fearful gaze wavered, and fell before him. Releasing her then, he straightened himself and drew a long breath.

"You are either the greatest actress on earth, or—"

Springing to her feet, she interrupted him, stung all at once to anger.

"Or what?"

"Or—shooting's too good for me!"

The words came out with almost a groan. Flinging himself into a chair, he covered his face with his hands. Her tears had dried; a strange coldness had come upon her. Her womanhood was wakening to some indefinable horror.

"I don't understand," she said slowly. She let herself sink on the sofa again and shivered slightly. "Lord Desmond—"

He dropped his hands, without turning his head to look at her.

"Well?"

"Perhaps"—she spoke as if every word hurt her—"perhaps you had better take me back, after all."

A moment he was silent. Then, with a movement of decision, he got up, dragged his chair close to the sofa, and sat down again, facing her. He had regained his self-control; but behind, there was a tenseness of extreme purpose, extreme resolve. For a little while he fixed her with a gaze now almost relentless in its keenness. Then abruptly:

"How old are you?" he asked.

She answered, wondering, timid, falling back into childishness under his masterful bearing:

"Twenty-one—just."

He repeated her answer, as if to himself: "Twenty-one—just."

Nervously she added:

"Mamma did not want me to say so. You know she kept me at school."

"All the time?"

"Oh, except during the holidays."

"Ah, the holidays. Did you always go home for the holidays?"

"Not home. At least—we had no home. But Fritz used to take me away somewhere, always. Sometimes I was with mamma. But if not, with Fritz."

"Fritz? That's the old man? The musician?"

"He's mamma's repetitor. He's been very good to me always." She hardly knew why her heart turned to the old tyrant just now, with such a rush—a rush of longing for his protection. It was all so strange, so bewildering. She wished Fritz were here. "He's always been good to me," she went on, and her voice trembled to the memory of her sobs. "I've been so bad to him."

"How long have you been back with your mother?"

"Only since Easter." Her dazed submissiveness suddenly failed her. "Why do you ask all these questions?" she exclaimed passionately. Who was this man—no longer lover and bridegroom? What did he want with her with this probing, with these eyes that pierced and sought into her very soul?

A quick flash came and was gone in his unsparing gaze.

"Because I must know—all."

Then she understood. All that was puzzling and torturing became clear to her, clear with a great terror. As one groping in a dangerous mountain path, blinded by mist, may see the chasm at his feet under a sudden blast of wind, she understood.

Pity came over his face. His eyes softened.

"You needn't answer, if you don't like."

But something rose within her, intrinsic frankness, pushing her to the truth. Reservation, deceit, was not of her. She rejected it, less by virtue than by a necessity of her nature.

"No, I will answer." She paused and gathered her bravery; then, whitening as she spoke, went on: "Ask what you like."

"Your mother sent for you last Easter?" His tone was now gentle; less that of the cross-examiner, more that of the confessor; less that of one who wants to entrap an admission than that of one who wants to help the difficult utterance of the truth.

"She would have sent me away after a week. It was the baron made her keep me."

"Did you know why, then?"

"No, indeed!" she cried hurriedly. "I only thought it was fun to be out of prison."

"So you went to Vienna."

"Yes—and the we met you."

He rose and took a couple of slow turns, up and down the room. She watched him. Oh, that he would ask and be done with it! Once or twice she hesitated on speech, but checked herself. Courage failed her to volunteer her shameful confession. Pausing at last by the chair, one knee upon it, he looked down upon her. Again, again, those eyes of insistent demand!

"These three months, then, you have seen all your mother's friends, been present at her parties, lived the life she lives?"

"I suppose so," she answered slowly. Then, with a flash of resentment: "You ought to know; you've been to nearly all of them yourself."

He laughed abruptly; then checked himself as suddenly, sat down, and pondered a moment.

"And now I know all your life, do I?"

The question was slow, weighted with importance. She stared, with parted lips; he could see an agonized pulse beating in her throat. He laid his hand gently on her shoulder.

"Fifi, there was something you were going to tell me, just now, when I stopped you." She shifted farther from him, her gaze still fixed on his face. "When you said you had not always"—he paused, his voice grew husky—"always been good, what did you mean by that?" Then, almost roughly, stabbed by the sight of her misery: "Don't tell me," he said once more.

"I will tell you—I'd rather." The words leaped bravely, though she twisted her interlaced fingers. "It was something that happened—something—"

"At Como." He was trying to help her out, but she winced.

"Yes—when I was eighteen. Mamma took me away that summer for the holidays. She was very good to me that summer, mamma. She had been ill. She was quite gentle. She used to say

it was nice to have a daughter. That was at the beginning."

The words were wrung from her in jerks, with each spasm of a breath shortened by the quick beating of her heart.

"That was at the beginning—and then?"

He felt he was cruel, but he had to be cruel.

"Then mamma got better, and then she did not want me any more. She used to go away, on picnics and things, and leave me behind. There was an English family in the hotel. I got into the way of going about with the girls, and playing tennis. And there was a young man with them, their brother. He was at school, at Oxford."

Desmond, over the turmoil of his feelings, had a faint smile.

"An undergraduate, I suppose. Well, Fifi?"

"One day they were all away, even Fritz. I was alone. It was so dull." She faltered and stopped. Then: "He asked me to go on the lake with him," she whispered.

"The Oxford young man—this Adolphus Wentworth?"

A little, indignant cry escaped her. Reproach and anger leaped into her glance. Then she drooped her head.

"You know all about it," she said dully. "I knew you knew. Why must I tell you?"

"Because," he said, and, sitting down before her once more, quickly took her cold hands into his, gave them one pressure, and released them, "because, Fifi, I will know nothing except what you tell me. You went with him that day?"

Dumbly she nodded.

"Just you and he, alone?"

She nodded again. "Just he and I alone."

Then, in a torrent of words, her confession escaped from her overcharged heart.

They had had chocolate at the town on the other side of the lake. And there had come a storm, and the boat could not go back. The steamers, even, would not go. No one would take them.

"And we could not get a carriage to

drive us round, and so we walked. We walked till I dropped. And it was quite late at night. At last we got a cart, and we did not get back to the hotel till four in the morning. Oh, it was all so dreadful!" She covered her hot face with her hands.

"They were all up. They said they thought we must be drowned. Nobody was a bit glad we were alive. And mamma said I was disgraced!" She was caught by a sob; but, with the impulse that leads one at certain moments of intensity to pile pain upon pain, deliberately: "Next day," she went on, "the English girl and her mother cut me!"

Amazedly, she felt his hands fold over hers again. How cold they both were!

"And the young man, Fifi?"

"He left by the next boat," she said steadily, but had not the courage to lift her eyes. Would she ever have the courage to lift them to his face again?

"Fifi, when you and that young fool were alone, that night—Fifi, I must have the truth!"

He felt her hands twist in his.

"Yes, yes!" Passionately she flung away the last reserve, the last shred between herself and what she conceived her shame. "He tried to kiss me, and was horrible! I never told any one but Fritz, and Fritz said—he said"—her voice trailed away pitifully—"he said that it was all my own fault; that no good girl would have gone away like that with a man who was not her betrothed."

The clasp of his cold fingers suddenly relaxed. He rose. Looking down upon her, he was shaken by a sudden tender laugh. But even as he laughed, tears sprang to his eyes; and hastily he went to the open window, struggling with the tide of exquisite emotion that was sweeping over him.

Desolately she knew only that he had left her. Then, as he did not come back to her, she said at length, with a long, forlorn sigh:

"I suppose it makes a great difference—now you know."

He started. Swiftly he was by her side again.

"A great difference!" he cried. "All the difference in the world!"

His tone was joyous, his blue eye on fire. She could not understand what had come over him.

"Give me your hands, Fifi. Fifi! Pshaw! What is your real name?"

"Virginia."

"Virginia!" he cried. And then again, with a change of tone that was like a caress: "Virginia." He paused a while, sitting on the sofa beside her, holding her hand, his own clasp growing warm again, warm and close. Comfort slid from it all unawares into her veins. "Virginia—you told me a little while ago that you had felt safe with me. You are safe."

She glanced up at him. How had she ever doubted him? His blue eyes held a depth of unimaginable tenderness and loyalty, something that in her innocence she could not fathom, but which, unerringly, she felt.

"I know."

"I'm not like—the Baron De Robecq now?"

"No—oh, no! Oh, Lord Desmond, you never were!"

He lifted the hand he held to his lips.

"Ah—Fifi—ah, Virginia! Ah, my poor child!"

His voice broke upon tenderness; he rose, rang the bell, and, coming back to the table, leaned with one hand upon it, his eyes on that cup of untasted tea she had prepared for him. The girl sat on, too bewildered by the conflicting emotions of the hour to be able to think reasonably. He had flung her from utter confidence to blank apprehension; from heights of bliss to depths of misery; had tortured, had probed; had shown himself relentless, an inquisitor—and now, though he had spoken no word of condonement, even of forgiveness, a peace and joy deeper than anything she had ever felt had come upon her. She knew only one thing, she loved him; he was her master; she would follow him to the end of the earth because she trusted him.

With a movement, as if wakened

from abstraction, he stretched his hand for the cup.

"Oh," she cried involuntarily, "it must be cold!"

As he paused, smiling, to look at her over the rim, the waiter entered, headlong as before, upon his knock.

"Yes, sir?" The words shot from the threshold.

"Kindly ask the landlady to be so good as to come to me—immediately."

"Mrs. Biddicombe, sir?"

"Mrs. Biddicombe, if you please."

"Yes, sir—ver' well, sir—immediately."

His small, harassed body was already outside the room, and the door closed upon the last words.

Then Desmond lifted the cup again to his lips, looked across it at Virginia, and drank the cold tea.

"There was not too much sugar in it," he said, laying the empty cup on the table. "It was excellent. Let Fritz say what he likes, my wife will keep house perfectly for me!"

He spoke the words in a deliberately airy voice; but he smiled as he spoke, and the girl closed her eyes over a sudden sense of happiness almost beyond endurance.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The proprietress of Biddicombe's Marine Hotel closed the door behind her with genteel precision; and, advancing within a few paces of the couple, stood eying them with suspicion and some loftiness. She was a stout, elderly lady, whose large brooch, black lace cap with mauve ribbons, and gray side curls proclaimed her the embodiment of middle Victorian respectability.

"Good evening—Mrs. Brown. Good evening—Mr. Brown." She inclined her head in turn to each. "Do I understand that you express a wish for an interview with me—Mr. Brown?"

"Good evening," responded Lord Desmond. He felt absurdly nervous. "Will you sit down?"

He pushed the chair slightly toward her. She received this attention with

an acid titter, and a formal inclination from the waist.

"No, thank you—Mr. Brown. When you sent for me, I was about to ask for an interview myself."

"Indeed?" said he.

He tried to look only politely interested. Bolt upright on the sofa, Virginia Lovinska sat staring with wide, tired eyes. Mrs. Biddicombe broke into a sudden glibness.

"Yes—Mr. Brown, I regret to say that there has been a mistake about the rooms. They was engaged previously. It was an error of the office, sir. If you'll excuse the liberty—Mr. Brown, I think you and your, your lady, Mr. Brown, would do better at the Metropole, or some similar establishment."

"There's been a mistake altogether," said Desmond quickly. "I want to leave this young lady in your charge."

"In my charge, sir?" echoed Mrs. Biddicombe, surprised out of all her defenses.

Without paying any attention to Fifi's long-drawn, disconsolate "Oh!" Desmond proceeded:

"She is very tired—much too tired to go out again to-night. You're a good, kind woman; I can see that in your face!"

"Oh, Mr. Brown!" Mrs. Biddicombe was not quite sure that she appreciated the familiarity of the compliment; but his earnestness bore her down.

"A good, kind, motherly woman," he repeated, with feeling. "Take care of her to-night. I'll look for lodgings for myself elsewhere. I shouldn't feel happy about her if I didn't know that I was leaving her, safe, with some one like you."

"Oh, Mr. Br—"

He raised his hand to check her, unable to bear the sound of that appellation again.

"I'm not Mr. Brown. She's not Mrs. Brown. This is Miss Lovinska, and I am Lord Desmond Brooke."

Virginia gave another cry, this time of astonishment. She could not, for the life of her, make out the meaning of his changeable purpose. But her voice was lost in the landlady's ejaculation. Unc-

tuously, as became the situation, if still reprobatively, the latter exclaimed:

"Oh, my lord!"

"She's run away from home," went on the distinguished guest of Biddicombe's rapidly, "because she was unhappy. Because they wanted to marry her to—to some one else, some one she could not love. I'm—I'm"—he hesitated and rubbed his forehead. "I'm bound to see that she comes to no harm, Mrs. Biddicombe. Do you understand me? Do you understand why I brought her to your house?"

Mrs. Biddicombe ran a fat and wrinkled hand doubtfully up and down one side of her black satin apron.

"I am—beginning to understand," she conceded slowly. "At least, I think so, my lord."

"Then, will you take care of her?" said Desmond, and smiled.

All at once the kindness and motherly feeling which he had diagnosed in her overflowed.

"I will, my lord." No doubt it was an unwonted and pleasurable sensation to be called upon to oblige a nobleman. She waddled across to Fifi, who sat disconsolately on the side of the table. "I will, my dear." She patted the unringed hand. "I will take care of you, excuse the liberty, as if you was my own."

"That's right," said Lord Desmond.

All in a fluster—as Mrs. Biddicombe described her sensations to the young lady in the office—the worthy woman hurried to the door.

"I'll come back and look after you presently, Miss Loosky, dear." It was as near as she could get to the outlandish name.

The door had no sooner shut off her portly form than Fifi broke into loud remonstrance. Had she been as young in years as she was still in mind, it would have been the wail of a worn-out child.

"Oh, oh! I never thought you would have been so unkind! To leave me alone like this! What do you mean to do with me? I don't understand!"

"My dear, it is only because I must take care of you. I shall be back in the morning. I've got a great deal to do to-night. I—"

He broke off. All at once the stifled mewing of a cat seemed to fill the room. He looked round distractedly.

"I can't explain," he cried.

She was moving away from him in uncertainty; she glanced at him once or twice timidly over her shoulder, then flung herself across the sofa and extracted from behind it a hidden basket. Instantly the mewing ceased.

Defiantly, yet with apprehension, too, she sat on the table and hurriedly lifted forth a struggling, irate kitten.

"You brought that!" he cried.

"I could not leave him behind. Eliza would have killed him!" She hugged the little beast to her breast. "He'll give no trouble. He's been so good!"

"How did you hide him?"

"Oh, your chauffeur looked after him at Canterbury."

"Gibbins?"

He was smiling. She glanced up, all confidence, and smiled in her turn. Then suddenly, in a frightened voice:

"Lord Desmond," she asked, "what is the matter?"

It seemed impossible that she could have seen aright, but, surely, these were tears in his eyes!

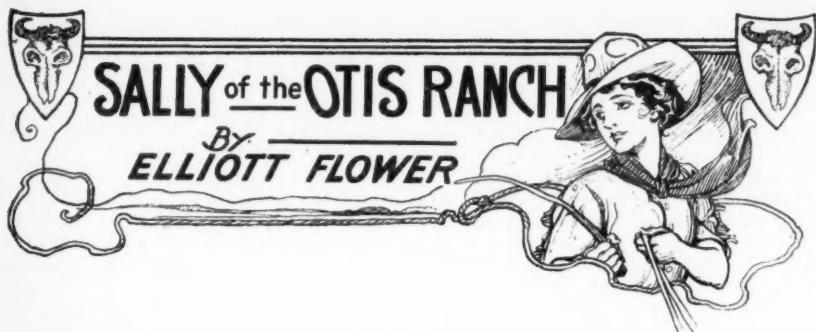
"The matter is," he said, and tried to laugh, and failed, "that you are such a child!"

Still clasping close the now swearing Persian, she stood, not daring to glance at her lover again.

"Good night," he said, and stroked her head with a light touch. "Sleep well!"

"How strange you are. Don't you love me any more?"

"Do I not love you!" He gave a kind of broken laugh. "Do I not?" And he caught her bright, disheveled head between his hands. Checking himself upon the very pulse of his passion, he kissed her once, above the eyes, and in two strides he was gone.



SALLY of the OTIS RANCH

BY
ELLIOTT FLOWER

SALLY was at the Otis ranch when we arrived there, which was really not at all surprising, for Sally was the daughter of Jim Otis. More important than this, however, was the fact that Sally was a girl to make any man sit up and take notice.

Alphabet Applegate, he of the many initials, promptly sat up. This was not surprising, either, for I had learned in our travels that Applegate was peculiarly susceptible to feminine charm. Had he not wanted to fight a "bad man" for Ella Golden? And had he not bought an interest in a worthless mine because of his sympathy for Jessie Coakley? Oh, yes, Applegate could be relied upon to play the knight for anything in petticoats.

In each case, however, it had turned out that he had had only a chivalrous interest in the girl—a desire to champion her cause because of her sex rather than because of her individuality—and I was not so much worried in this instance.

Still, Sally Otis was a girl to whose charms and accomplishments any man might fall a victim. She was slightly under medium height, and looked even smaller than she really was beside the big Englishman. She had dark hair, snapping black eyes, and the figure, complexion, and grace of movement that come from plenty of outdoor exercise. She was quick, vivacious, and naturally, being a ranch owner's daughter, a splendid horsewoman. She was, indeed, the

very opposite of Applegate in both physical and mental characteristics.

We stopped at the Otis ranch because it was the most convenient place to spend the night. Our destination was a ranch some distance beyond, but my horse went lame, and we were unable to make it. Having wearied of mines, after acquiring an interest in a "prospect," Applegate had decided to investigate ranching as a possible investment and occupation, in spite of his expressed disinclination to "act as valet to a lot of bally cows." It was worth considering, at least, as something that might meet his father's approval, although he said he "rawther fawncied the guv'nor would be jolly well pleased to put up for anything" that would keep him away from the fascinations of London.

We came to the Otis ranch in the afternoon. Because of the condition of my horse, it would be impossible to reach our destination before nightfall, and we had no mind to travel after dark in a country of which we had so little knowledge; it would be too easy to lose our way. Besides, it seemed like cruelty to animals to call upon my horse for anything further in his crippled condition. By morning, with proper treatment, he might be fit to go on.

Applegate made a mistake, but a natural one, at the start: he offered to pay for our supper, lodging, and breakfast. It is not etiquette in that part of the country to offer to pay for hospitality. Applegate discovered this when Otis informed him, rather brusquely, that

he was not running a hotel. Applegate apologized, and Otis then extended a cordial invitation to us to remain.

Then came Sally. Applegate was interested at once; but, remembering the previous occurrences, I was not worried. Sally, small, vivacious, quick, was such a contrast to Applegate, big, indolent, slow, that it was small wonder she interested him. He also interested her, he was so different from the men she knew. He likewise interested the cowboys, but in a very different way. He was a huge joke to them—at first.

Sally and Applegate were together all the rest of that afternoon and all of the evening, while I browsed about alone or talked with Otis when he was not occupied with some detail of his business. Each apparently was a puzzle and something of a curiosity to the other, and puzzles are always interesting.

"Ripping fine girl," was his comment when we retired that evening, but he had said the same thing of others. "Odd kind, though," he added. "Never met one like her, you know." A little later he asked: "D'y think, old chap, that bally horse will be able to go on in the morning?"

"Oh, no doubt about it," I replied.

He shook his head. "Deuced bad thing to take chawnces with a good horse," he remarked.

This unusual solicitude for the horse puzzled me, especially as the horse was far from being a particularly good one, but I could not see that it was a matter of any great importance, so I dismissed it from my mind, and went to sleep.

The next morning, after breakfast, we went out to see the horse. One of the men, with a veterinary training, had been busy with him the night before, and rest and his ministrations had apparently made the horse as good as ever. But Applegate was doubtful; he could still detect a slight limp. He feared this would develop into serious lameness before we reached our destination, possibly crippling the animal for all time.

The ranchmen present smiled derisively; it was another joke for them. Applegate's appropriation of Sally the day before had not tended to make him

popular with them, for I had learned that she was the pet of the ranch, and every man on it was her cavalier. To have this Britisher, who was a joke at best, find favor in her eyes, was not at all to their liking. So the bigger fool he made of himself the better pleased were they.

To me, the affair had a different significance; Applegate did not want to go on. That made me all the more anxious to get started, and Otis came to my assistance.

"Leave this hoss here," said Otis, "and take one of mine. You'll be coming back this way, and you can change off again then."

"Awful good of you, old chap," replied Applegate, "but we couldn't think of it, you know."

"Why not?" demanded Otis. "I got so many hosses I'll never know one's gone."

"Just the thing," I agreed heartily.

Applegate was plainly annoyed, but he was equal to the emergency. In spite of his apparent indolence, he was always equal to an emergency.

"You Americans," he said, "are in such a beastly hurry when you have anything to do. I cawn't make it out at all, you know. It's of no consequence, none at all, whether we get there to-day noon or to-night, and they tell me it's only hawf a day from here. Holton's bally beast may be in better condition by noon. My fawncy is to wait and see."

Again the ranchmen smiled derisively, for their expert judgment told them that the horse was in shape to continue the journey at once, but Applegate had his way. I agreed, for I could see no harm in remaining that long, but neither could I see any reason for it—except Sally.

It was evident that that was reason enough for Applegate, however, for he joined her at once, and they were together all the morning. Then, a little before noon, he sought out Otis. I happened to be with Otis at the time.

"I say, old chap," was Applegate's astounding question, "d'y want to sell?"

Otis looked at him in amazement. "Sell what?" he asked.

"The rawnch," replied Applegate.

"No!" thundered Otis.

"I'd rawther like to buy it," said Applegate insinuatingly.

"Why, you haven't seen it yet!" exclaimed Otis, apparently unable to comprehend this form of insanity.

I was equally startled and mystified.

"Of no consequence," returned Applegate calmly.

I was making frantic signals to him to go slow, but he paid no attention.

"You haven't seen a tenth part of it," declared Otis.

"Of no consequence," repeated Applegate. "I could look it over awfterward, you know."

It was too much for Otis; he leaned weakly against the side of the house.

"If you cawn't bring yourself to sell it all, you know," pursued Applegate imperturbably, "I might take a hawf interest."

"Oh, you might?"

"Quite right, old chap."

"No partners for me!" asserted Otis warmly. "There don't anybody get a half interest in my ranch. If I sell at all, I'll sell all."

"Wise of you, no doubt," agreed Applegate. "What's the figure?"

"Are you a blithering idiot?" demanded Otis, by way of answer.

"D'y'e know," returned Applegate, "I fawncy that's the what the guv'nor is trying to find out."

"You don't know anything about ranching. What would you do with a ranch?"

"I rawther think the guv'nor wants me to have one," answered Applegate, as if that settled the question.

Otis was so overcome that he sat down on a doorsill. Applegate sat down beside him. I wandered away, now satisfied that there was no danger, and that we would be on our way immediately after dinner.

How Applegate did it I do not know, but inside of half an hour he had induced Otis to take the matter of selling the ranch under consideration. Otis held out no particular hope that he

would sell on any terms. There was a possibility that he might, as he admitted that he had some other plans that would provide use for his money and occupation for himself, but the possibility was remote. However, he agreed to consider the matter, and that naturally meant that we would remain at the ranch until he reached a decision. I was considerably annoyed, for I had no doubt, if he decided to sell at all, that he would put on a fancy price. I resolved to make some inquiries as to the real value of the property. I also resolved to have a serious talk with Applegate, but there was no immediate opportunity.

At dinner Sally informed her father casually that she believed she would see what she could do with Spitfire that afternoon.

"I need the exercise, dad," she explained, "and the excitement. I'm getting rusty."

"One of those hosses," returned Otis slowly, "is going to hurt you some day, Sally." But he made no further objection.

"Is Spitfire so dangerous?" I asked.

"Oh, he's been ridden before," replied Sally, "but he's far from being broke yet. He's a bucker."

"I say, now, what's a bucker?" put in Applegate.

"A bucker," explained Sally, "is a horse that keeps you busy trying to stick on. His methods are many. Sometimes he tries to shoot you into the next county, and sometimes he tries to catapult you heavenward."

"It must be jolly sport," commented Applegate.

"It is," said Sally.

That was the beginning of the trouble for Applegate. While Sally was preparing for her "exercise," after we had finished dinner, several of the cowboys lingered with us in the shade of the house. This was unusual, as they had no liking for Applegate, but they had evidently heard of the proposed adventure. And how guileless they were! It was nearly two minutes before I discovered what they were up to, but I was quite helpless. They gave particular at-

tention to Applegate, discussing the weather and such general topics, and finally bringing the conversation around to horses.

"Ever do any ridin'?" asked one of them.

"I should rawther think so," replied Applegate. "I've followed the hounds, you know."

"And what was the hounds follerin'?" queried the spokesman.

"Oh, I say, now," expostulated Applegate, "don't try to make an awss of me. What would the hounds be following, you know, but an anise-seed bag."

"Great snakes!" exclaimed the spokesman enthusiastically. "That must be 'most as much fun as chasin' a tame rabbit with a butterfly net. But you sure look like you could ride without pullin' leather."

"Pulling leather!" repeated Applegate, mystified. "I cawn't see why anybody should pull leather, you know."

"There don't no real man do it," explained the spokesman, "but some that sizes up as a man in every other way does."

"Where do they get the leather, old chap?" asked Applegate.

"Why, the saddle, of course."

"Anybody that tried to pull the leather off the saddle," declared Applegate severely, "is a silly awss. You cawn't do it, you know."

"Back up!" exclaimed the spokesman. "You're comin' down the wrong trail. Pullin' leather means holdin' on to the saddle when your hoss does ground and lofty tumblin'."

"Oh," said Applegate, "you cawn't do that with an English saddle, so I never did—never, I assure you."

"You don't look like you would," agreed the spokesman heartily. "You look like you was game. You can sure ride anything a woman can ride."

"I should rawther hope so," returned Applegate, my signals to him passing unnoticed. "I fawncy you're making game of me," he added doubtfully.

"Not any," returned the spokesman earnestly, "and I'll prove it to you. After Miss Sally's through we'll put

the very same sport up to you. Won't we, boys?"

"We sure will," they agreed heartily.

"It's jolly good of you," said Applegate, in his innocence. But I knew what was coming.

"And you'll go against it?" asked the spokesman anxiously.

"Against what, old chap?" asked Applegate.

"You'll ride?" explained the spokesman.

"You're jolly well right I will," returned Applegate.

I could picture to myself the hilarity of those cowboys as soon as they were out of sight, but Sally appeared before I could explain to Applegate, and Sally was a picture to make one forget all else. Naturally, for the task she was about to undertake, it was necessary to discard skirts, and it was evident that she had had a costume prepared especially for these diversions. It was masculine in its general design, and yet there were feminine touches to it that made it seem not at all inappropriate, and she was certainly piquantly fascinating in it. Even her chaps, essentially masculine as they are, somehow did not make her less feminine, perhaps because of the feminine effects in the waist and jacket above them and their own departure in some ways from masculine standards. Anyhow, she was just as much a girl now as she was in skirts.

"I say, now," exclaimed Applegate, as soon as he had recovered from his surprise, "why don't you dress that way all the time? You're simply ripping."

"I hope not," she laughed.

"But why don't you?" he insisted.

"I'd like to, but I'm afraid it would attract too much attention."

Then she led the way to the corral.

I shall not attempt to describe her riding. It was superb. Once in the saddle, that bucking brute had no more chance with her than he would have had with a porous plaster. I yelled myself hoarse in my enthusiasm. So did Applegate. But every now and then I noted something serious and solemn in Applegate's expression. I surmised

that this was when he remembered that he had contracted to give the same kind of a performance. He knew now just what kind of a job he had on his hands.

As for the cowboys, they were in ecstasies. They were all enthusiastic admirers of Sally, and shouted words of commendation to her, but their great joy was unquestionably occasioned by the fact that they had entrapped Applegate.

As soon as Sally decided that she had had what exercise she needed, they brought up another horse for Applegate. If I were to hazard a guess, I should say that they picked out one considerably worse than Sally's. Sally had temporarily mastered hers, although I was told that it would require several such lessons to permanently tame him, but this brute looked as if he never would be tamed.

I fully expected Applegate to back out. This was not the kind of riding that he was accustomed to, and I felt that he would be justified in declining. The cowboys seemed to fear that he might, and I could see smiles and winks of joyful anticipation when he began to divest himself of his coat. They encouraged him with complimentary references to his gameness, but he paid no attention, merely preparing himself for his task in his usual methodical way.

"You can never ride that horse," I whispered to him.

"What of it, old chap?" he returned. "I can't be a mucker, you know."

They held the horse for him until he was in the saddle, and then sprang back. He stayed there almost three seconds. A sort of combination twist and side jump unseated him.

"The brute's so beastly sudden," he remarked, as he picked himself out of the dirt.

"But you don't let no hoss think he's boss of you," urged one of the cowboys insinuatingly. "You sure got the sand to try it again."

"Why, I rawther think so," replied Applegate, in his deliberate way.

Sally had been watching him with some amusement, and I saw her nod her head approvingly.

He mounted again, bracing himself for that side jump, but this time the horse, the moment he was released, made two or three quick jumps straight ahead, to unsettle the rider, ran about ten yards, and then planted his forefeet and stopped short. Applegate did not stop. He quickly and unintentionally changed his seat from the saddle to the horse's neck, from which unstable place he was quickly dislodged.

Applegate said never a word this time. He dusted himself off with his usual deliberation, and asked them to hold the horse again. I could see that his stock was rising with the cowboys. They realized that he was game all the way through.

This time the horse bucked. Applegate went up, came down, went up again, came down again, and exercised himself in this way for several round trips. On the return from the fifth ascent, however, he failed to hit the saddle, and the next minute he was again on the ground.

"The bally brute don't do it twice alike," he complained.

"No," explained one of the cowboys, "he's got eighteen ways of making a man eat dirt."

"Eighteen!" repeated Applegate. "Say, old chap, I rawther fawney I'll have him when I learn them all."

Yes, Applegate's stock was rising. He had grit, and there is nothing the cowboy admires so much as that.

The next time the horse tried a combination of all three previous methods, ending with a mighty buck, and then quickly standing from under, so that he wasn't there when Applegate came down.

Four more times did he throw Applegate in divers ways, but it only seemed to make the Englishman the more determined.

"I'll ride the bally brute if it takes a year," he declared.

He had so far gained the respect of the cowboys that one of them now sought to give him advice.

"Dig your spurs into the devil when you come down," he said.

"But I don't stay long enough, old chap," complained Applegate.

"Certain you do," was the reply, "but you got to be quick."

The horse tried straight bucking the next time, and on the third descent Applegate lingered long enough to drive the spurs home. There was a jump forward that would have unseated a novice, but Applegate was really a good horseman in his way, although this branch of the sport was new to him. He kept his seat, and dug his spurs in again. He kept digging them in to keep the horse going, and the horse did go. About the third circuit of the corral Otis yelled at him: "Why don't you pull him up?"

"Let him run down, old chap," Applegate shouted back. "I can stand this as long as he can."

And he did let him run down. The brute was too weary to have any ambition left when Applegate finally pulled him up.

He had conquered the cowboys as well as the horse. Grit is one thing that they always recognize. The horse might be only temporarily conquered, merely tired out, but the cowboys surrendered unconditionally. Whatever their opinion of him before, he was now deemed worthy to associate with Sally. He was given a cheer as he limped away to give attention to his many bruises. Sally went with him. I lingered to talk with the cowboys. I decided that they would have a pretty good idea of the value of the ranch, and a little diplomatic questioning ought to give me the information I desired.

It was evening before I had a chance to talk with Applegate privately. Then I went at him without circumlocution.

"What do you want of this ranch?" I demanded. "You can't run it. You don't know anything about ranching. The idea was, if you went into this sort of thing, to buy an *interest* in a ranch, so that you would have an experienced partner, but here you——"

"Chuck it, old chap," he interrupted, "Otis won't ever sell."

"Then, why in thunder are you wasting your time dickering with him?" I persisted.

"Cawn't you see?" he returned simply.

"I can see Sally," I admitted, "but I was in hopes——"

"You were wrong, old chap."

"Look here, Applegate," I exclaimed, "are you serious?"

"Quite so," he replied imperturbably.

"Then you checkmated me three times and opened negotiations with Otis for the sole purpose of having Sally's society a little longer."

"You have wonderful intuition, old chap," he commented, "but I'd rawther you called her Miss Otis."

"I should," I admitted, "but everybody here speaks of her as Sally, and one naturally falls into the habit. But this vagary of yours is likely to prove costly. You made no definite offer. That leaves it to Otis, if he decides to sell, to make his own price, and, no matter how high it is, you'll be in a mighty awkward position, after urging him so strongly to sell. You're not bound, of course, but you'll be in a mighty unpleasant predicament. I don't think Otis will sell, myself, but there's a big temptation when a man can practically name his own price."

"I say, now," exclaimed Applegate, "d'ye know I never thought of that. What would you do?"

"Make a definite offer while you've still got a chance," I advised. "Get down to figures yourself; don't leave it to him to make the price. I've been investigating, and I find that this ranch, with stock and buildings, is worth eighty thousand dollars at the outside. Make him an offer of seventy thousand dollars, and do it now. You can't back out very well, but you're perfectly justified in making your proposition definite, and he'll never sell at that figure."

"By Jove, old chap, I fawncy you're right," agreed Applegate. "I'll look him up immediately."

He was back in about half an hour.

"Find him?" I asked.

Applegate nodded.

"What did he say to your proposition?" I persisted.

"Why, d'ye know, he said it was

rawther more than the rawnch was worth," answered Applegate, "and I told him it was of no consequence."

"Of no consequence!" I exclaimed. "You've got a fine business head, Applegate! No wonder they shipped you away from London! You offer him sev-enty thousand dollars, and—"

"But I offered him a hundred thousand, you know," interrupted Applegate, "and he had me put it in writing."

"Oh, merciful Lucifer!" I cried. "Am I guardian to an inspired idiot?"

"I rawther think that's what the guv'-nor is trying to find out," returned Applegate, entirely unruffled.

"I told you that eighty thousand was the limit price."

"But not with the girl, old chap."

It took me several minutes to calm myself, but I finally succeeded.

"See here!" I said severely. "I wasn't sent out as a matrimonial agent; I was sent out to advise you in the matter of an investment."

"You're so beastly particular," he complained. "Now, I awsk you, isn't a good wife the best kind of an investment?"

It was enough to drive a man in my position to distraction.

"What will your father say?" I asked.

"Why, I fawncy the guv'nor will be jolly well pleased. It rawther fixes me, don't you know."

"Have you said anything to her?" I pursued apprehensively.

"Why, yes, old chap, I have."

"What did she say?" I asked.

"She said 'no.'"

I breathed easier.

"But awfter that ride," he went on, "I awsked her again, and I'm to have her awnser to-morrow."

This was serious. It is always serious when a girl who has flatly refused a man once delays her answer to the second proposal. Evidently Applegate's ride had changed her opinion of him.

"And you think this time her answer will be 'yes'?" I suggested.

"Why not, old chap?" he returned. "I'm not such a bad sort of a fellow,

you know—good family, and all that bally rot."

"Then why do you make such a foolish offer for the ranch?" I queried.

"Cawn't you see?"

"No, I can't."

"Oh, I say, now, you're dreadful dull," he complained wearily. "If I awsk her to marry me and go away, I haven't hawf the chawnce that I have if I awsk her to marry me and remain here. She loves the rawnch. But I fawncy I won't get it, anyhow."

"That's my only hope," I sighed.

You can't do much with a man who is six feet two, built in proportion, and of age, when his mind is made up, so I dropped the subject.

The next afternoon he came to me as I loafed in the shade of the house.

"She won't have me, old chap," he sighed lugubriously.

My heart leaped with joy, for I had feared that I would be blamed for any matrimonial entanglement. And, of course, if Sally refused him, it was a practical certainty that Otis would not let the ranch go.

"Positively won't have me," he repeated dismally; "says she's rawther fond of me in a way, but we're too far apart in our training and ideals. We'll move along, old chap, but I'll come back some day—"

Just then Otis emerged from the house.

"It looks to me, Mr. Applegate," said Otis, "like I can't afford to refuse your offer."

This was one time that Applegate was really startled, but he merely looked at Otis a moment in blank amazement.

"I say, old chap," he remarked at last almost pleadingly, "do that again, will you?"

"I'm ready to turn over the ranch as soon as you get the money from London," explained Otis.

Applegate turned to me. "Now, what d'ye think of that?" he asked weakly. "The rawnch without the girl. I've been a silly awss, don't you think?"

I told him he had stated the case accurately, which did not seem to please him at all.

The Flight of Jennifer

By

Mayne Lindsay



LATHOM, the man whose fingers had encompassed an art, was extraordinarily awkward with one arm in a sling. The useless hand, huddled against his coat, nagged at him without ceasing; he believed, himself, that the feeling he had once been able to put upon canvas congested his mind, now that he had lost the power to express it. He had come to Cornwall blindly because it was remote; but he was too much of an artist not to be tantalized by the beauty—the wide, placid beauty—of his refuge.

There was a valley between the farmhouse where he lodged and the sea. The easier way to the coast—the seemly way for a disabled man—lay on the road; Mr. Lathom preferred field paths. He wanted to ignore the peculiar, exasperating idiosyncrasies of the Cornish stiles, but seven in a mile refused to be ignored. He climbed six with a slow obstinacy, and the seventh mastered him. He stepped on the slate crossbar, staggered, remembered too late that the surgeon had recommended cautious exercise only, and fell headlong, rolling over into the ditch.

He lay there groping and groaning for a few moments, and then a pair of firm hands raised him by the armpits and helped him to the bank.

"Sit still. You're hurt. Let me see what I can do for you."

Lathom perceived that there had been a woman and a child in the ditch, blackberrying, and that they had seen him fall. The child, after a stare, wandered along the hedge; even in his discomfiture he saw the fine note of color its

blue blouse made under the thorns and the late honeysuckle. The woman, who was young, brushed a crisp strand of brown hair away from her forehead, and applied herself to his ruined hand.

He followed her attention, and saw the blood was showing through the bandage.

"Tut!" he said. "I have opened a half-healed cut. It isn't dangerous; but it is tiresome."

"Let me see," she repeated, unrolling deftly.

She had an unfaltering touch. At such close quarters she had the fragrance of a wholesome, sweet-breathed thing. Her face was half hidden, but he saw—what charm was there his artist's eyes ever failed to see?—that her ear was shell-like, and that a long, pure curve ran from lobe to chin.

"Yes, it is bleeding. It must be stanch'd, and bathed. I think. Stay where you are, and I will bring some water, and do it for you."

She rose, to more than the average woman's height, and swung down the field. She moved splendidly, with a free stride. There was a tiny cottage in the valley, and she addressed her steps to it.

The child edged across to the stranger. He was a boy three or four years old, with a thatch of hair as crisp and brown as the woman's, and a body no less well built than hers. Her child, Lathom considered; there was the fine cheek curve again. He wondered that there was so little married circumspection in her grace and her swift movement. The matron, in the English country, is drearily unmistakable as a rule.

While he was turning it over in his mind she returned, carrying all that she wanted for the office she had to perform.

She had no bandage, she explained, but a clean handkerchief would do as well. She tied it, watched him for a moment, and then handed him to his feet.

"I'll show you a gate on to the road," she said. "Stiles are not good for invalids; at least, not such stiles as ours. What made you come this way?"

"There's a view one gets half up the opposite hill."

"The sea and the Head between the cornfields? With a patch of glorious cabbage in the foreground?"

He raised his eyebrows.

"What do you know about those cabbages?" he asked.

"Why, that they are vegetable opals—purple, blue, green, iridescent. Aren't they? I know a Frenchman or two—and perhaps one Englishman—who could do them justice."

It flashed across him in a jerk of disappointment that she must know his identity. So it was the old, stale, fawning game even in the wilds of a Cornish valley! He did not try to disguise his annoyance; he scowled.

"I beg your pardon," she said instantly. "I forgot for the minute I was talking to anybody. That's just it; I don't know anything about cabbages, as such, and it would be better if I did. Can you go on alone now? I mustn't take my baby too far, and I see he is following. Good-by."

She nodded; she wheeled; she was gone.

Lathom toiled on, his wounds aching; alert, disturbed, pleased, and displeased. After all, how could she tell who he was? It was a coincidence, no more. Cottage women had, however, no business to know who painted cabbages with genius, and who did not. He scented a mystery. Her personality occupied his mind all the weary way home.

At the farmhouse door his landlady fell upon him. Was he faint? Had he had a fall? When? Who had helped him up?

"I don't know," Lathom said, in answer to the last question. "She came from the cottage down the fields, or seemed to."

"Jennifer Tremaine!" cried Mrs. Polworthy. "Jennifer, to be sure."

"Jennifer Tremaine? I saw that name in the churchyard."

"Well you might; 'twould be this one's grandmother."

"She has the same name as her grandmother? She's not a married woman, then?"

He was soothed, for a reason he was disinclined to analyze at the moment, by his deduction.

"Why, no." Mrs. Polworthy laughed meaningly. "I can't think any hereabouts would wish to marry the likes of her. Yet, I own she's comely. All I say is, thank Heaven I've no son to go courting down along."

Lathom had had his ears open; he wanted to know so much. Mrs. Polworthy's air, and her invitation to fuller confidences, pulled him up. He remembered, not a whit too soon, the humorous, malicious delight of Cornish folk in their neighbors' shortcomings. These people—Mrs. Polworthy a typical example of them—enjoyed nothing better than the joke of somebody else's humiliation, some other body's weakness. He was quite sure now that he did not wish to hear anything the neighborhood might be saying of Jennifer Tremaine. He parried the disclosures, with the surest weapon to his hand.

"I am hungry and tired. I'm panting for my tea—tea and cream, and buttered scones, Mrs. Polworthy!"

The good soul was gone, ardent on her errand, in a flash.

That night Lathom's wound, violently reopened, throbbed to remind him of his helplessness. His thoughts were troubled, but less by physical discomfort than by the riddle of the girl with the brown hair, the free woman, of whom Polworthys could dare to hint scandal. The child? His reason rounded off Mrs. Polworthy's laugh with an obvious story; but his heart, stoutly intrenched in the ideal, refused to tolerate it.

He brooded another day, and on the third he took her handkerchief and set off for the cottage.

"Thank you," she said. "You are really better? You must be more careful; I can see you have been ill."

She was slicing beans on a bench before her door. Below her lay the green carpet of pasture, beyond her a hill, harvest-laden, met the sweep of the sky. Phlox and dahlias, marigolds and southernwood sweetened her tiny garden. The child, still deliciously blue-bloused, was grubbing by the open fence.

"What a harbor of refuge from mean, ugly things," he said, contemplating the scene, and acutely conscious of her.

She shook her head.

"I thought so when I came here; now I am wiser. But, at least, there's health for the boy, and, winter or summer, this corner is good to look at."

"Are you a painter?"

"No," she said. "I was brought up among pictures, though." She turned to look steadily at him. "You know, don't you?"

"What do you think I know?"

"Surely—" She paused. "I am Jennifer Tremaine."

"So I have heard. That is all I do know. What else is there?"

The color came into her cheeks.

"Ask Mrs. Polworthy."

"I don't gossip with Mrs. Polworthy—worthy soul!"

"Don't you?" She observed him closely, and laughed a little. "I admire your independent spirit," she said. "Come indoors, and I will show you my treasures."

She led the way into a low room, austere yet neat, gay with sun, colored by a blue rug and some cool chintzes within pale-brown walls. Lathom paused to refresh himself with the general effect before he darted upon her pictures.

"Hello, here's a Scrateherd! And a Longworth! Meutier, too! My dear lady, no wonder you know the colors of a cabbage."

He stopped, for he found himself looking at one of his own pictures. He glanced sideways, and saw she was unconscious of his recognition.

"What do you think of that fellow?" he said, laboring his carelessness.

"John Lathom? He has a future, if he hasn't attained it by this time. I often wonder what he has been doing since I left the news of—of everything behind me, and came here."

"You don't keep in touch, then? Or even read the newspapers?"

"They are odious to me," the girl said, with a flash of disgust.

Lathom lost his melancholy. He chuckled until she was forced to join him.

"My case exactly," gurgled he, "Let's shake hands on it. The world forgotten, eh? Well done!"

So their understanding began, and ran on, ripening, to the birth of a still October. Mrs. Polworthy held her tongue, perfume; there was something in Lathom's look that forbade comment on his absences in the valley. If the gossips chattered behind his back he was unaware of it, for he was living in an atmosphere too joyous, too rare, for muddy minds to penetrate.

Jennifer Tremaine welcomed him, and he grasped the privileges of each golden day as they came. This girl—this picture lover, this strange, sweet discovery of his—had taken him by storm. One question was laid to rest early in their friendship. The child was the son of a dead brother, motherless, too; it was for his sake—she did not explain herself further—that she had come, in the first instance, to this place of her forefathers in Cornwall.

She must have seen the end of it all; but the strongest women have their feminine prevarications, and can turn them on themselves. She gathered her own delight in his company, and stopped her ears and shut her eyes to the impending day of reckoning. It came, as a matter of fact, on a starry evening, when, the boy having been put to bed, she came downstairs, to find Lathom waiting for her on the bench by the door.

She heard him, supporting himself against the door jamb, his face glimmering, his trim figure shadowy, his eyes veiled by the dusk.

"You must know I love you, Jenni-

fer. I am a maimed wretch, but I believe I can make your life happy. We understand each other already, you and I."

"No," she said abruptly. "We are very far from understanding each other. I, at least, am a sealed book to you."

"Oh, I know there is something in your life you are sensitive about. I respect it; let it be; there's an end of it. It's in the past, eh? Well, it is only the present—and the future that matters."

He preened himself, satisfied with his dismissal of all that might be vexing her. He was so sure of himself.

"You have friends and relations, haven't you?" the girl said, after a short silence.

"Heaps of 'em. Good souls, too. You shall meet them, and like them, too, Jennifer."

She shrank back. The next minute she came forward, bent, and caressed his forehead with her cool hand. The blood rushed and thrilled in Lathom's veins; he could have knelt to her for the tenderness.

"I can't answer you now. I must have the night for thinking." Weariness came into her voice. "Oh! There is so much thinking to be done. Good night, my dear."

The endearment, from those reticent lips, served. John Lathom trod on air all the way home. It was not Lathom the painter who had achieved this triumph—strange, perhaps, that she had never suspected him—but Lathom the man, and the one-handed man, at that. Lesser conquests have gone to men's heads like wine. He thanked his Maker soberly, under the stars, for creating him to love her.

Never a strong sleeper since his illness, Lathom fell asleep late, and awoke early. He rose and dressed in the dawn, and stole out, to the edge of the valley, to get a glimpse of her cottage roof from below his feet. At the earliest minute compatible with Mrs. Polworthy's liberal breakfast, he turned his back upon the house and set out for Jennifer's domain.

It struck him as strange when he

came to the garden gate that the blue blouse was nowhere to be seen, that the bench was empty, and the tidy threshold was littered with straw. Still he marched on confidently, to be met at the door by an old woman, who eyed him with rustic incomprehension.

"Where's Miss Tremaine?" said John Lathom, advancing a foot.

The woman had a broom. There was a packing case half full of rubbish behind her, and, farther back again, he was shocked to see that the walls were dismantled, and that the chintz covers and the rug were gone. The place stood revealed in its nakedness. Miss Tremaine was gone, bag and baggage. Where? The ancient could not rightly say. Miss Tremaine had been roused early, and ordered a cart, and called for some one to clear up after her and lock the cottage. She had taken the boy, and a power o' luggage.

"You *must* know where she has gone! Has she left a message for me—for any one?"

"Message? Not as I knows on. And where she be gone, Lord love'e, is not for me to say." Then perception seemed to twinkle out of her withered face. "Try Penny, the carter, if so be 'ee be wishful to follore the young person, sir."

Lathom needed no second hint. He thrust some money at the old woman, and rushed to the village. It was an easy matter to learn that Penny, the carter, had driven a fare to the railway; but not so easy to disentangle himself from voluble Mrs. Penny, and engage a gig for himself, and hurry in pursuit. He arrived at the station, an hour's drive away, to see the London train standing at the platform.

Lathom took no ticket; he saw the tail of the blue blouse being hauled into a carriage. He was not in time to follow it; he threw himself into a compartment next to the guard's van, and rocked breathless on the first stage of the journey. He was cool by the time the first stop came, and he had his thoughts, and his resolutions, well in hand and in order.

He walked along the platform, and

opened the door of Jennifer's carriage. She and her nephew were alone, surrounded by bags and bundles, and she was looking at the Cornish landscape through the farther window. When Lathom spoke her name she turned, looking at him with the first pallor he had seen in her face, with her fine eyes fixed tragically upon him.

He confronted her, not without sternness.

"Is it possible you are running away from me?"

She said nothing. She continued to gaze at him.

"I am not so easily shaken off," Lathom said. "I love you too much. You know what has happened to us. It is fate, Jennifer. We belong to each other."

The color came back to her cheeks. Her womanhood looked out at him, ripe, splendid, insistent in its claim upon her. Then she shrank again, compressing her lips.

"You must not marry me."

"Must not? Nothing will convince me of that."

"I must tell you, I see," she said. "I have been a coward; I should have done it long ago. It would have been easier for us both. Oh, the fault is mine."

"I am not afraid of anything you may have to tell me," Lathom said. "Are you sure it is necessary? Remember, if it pains you to speak, I am content to trust you, and go untold."

"No; I must tell you now," she repeated.

She rose, went to the child, and gave him a basket of toys to play with at the far corner of the compartment. She returned, seated herself before Lathom as a prisoner might face his judge, and folded her strong hands tightly in her lap.

"You must have heard of the Tremaine murder," she said.

Lathom lay back, knitting his brows. The Tremaine murder? It rose mistily out of the heavy type of the newspapers, out of the scarlet lettering of posters, indistinctly from the chatter of dinner tables and the street. It had happened

three or four years ago, he thought, and it had been the sensation of a season.

"I am beginning to recall it," he said. "A man murdered his wife—was convicted, I think."

"Arthur Tremaine was my brother."

"His father?"

"Yes."

There was a pause, filled by the rattling of the train.

"And, even so?" Lathom said, in a low voice, catching her eyes to his. "What has that to do with you and me?"

"I see you do not remember. I must tell you all the story."

This time he did not protest, or move. He watched her as she went on speaking.

"I lived with them—with Arthur and his wife. He was an artist, and he had married a model, an Italian woman. She was—she was a bad woman. She never cared for her child, and I think she hated her husband, as well as despised him.

"They quarreled when they were together. She had made a friend of a fellow countryman of hers, another model. She used to bring him home, until Arthur turned him out of the house. Then she went away, too, and joined him.

"Arthur said that he would kill her; he said it publicly, and it was brought up against him at the trial. I knew his temper, too; I knew he was capable of doing it, for, although he was a weak man, he was a dangerous man to rouse. I wanted to warn her, to do something to—"

She stopped. Lathom laid his hand over hers. She went on again.

"I wrote to her, asking her to come secretly to the studio, to meet me alone. I meant to warn her. She came before I arrived, and Arthur was there, and she taunted him, and he killed her.

"I found her lying on the ground. I tried to help him to escape, to get away out of England. Well! He did not succeed in escaping, and they found my letter to her, decoying her, as it seemed, to her death. He was tried for her

murder, and I with him as an accessory after the fact."

Lathom's hand closed on hers. She was shuddering; but she steeled herself to finish what she had begun.

"He was condemned; I think he was glad to pay the full penalty, if you can even speak of gladness in such a case. They—they acquitted me."

"You were innocent."

"I was besmirched, bloodstained," she said, with a look of horror. "Wherever I went, that fact went, too. I was a spectacle, a show, a wonder to a world full of eyes. I was hunted through London by the press men. They would have been kinder if they had stoned me."

"I came to Cornwall because I thought one's own people would surely understand, and pity the child, if they did not have mercy on me. It was a mistake; they would have nothing to do with us, only to point after us, and tell our story."

"That is all," she ended quickly. "I have nothing to add to it that you cannot supply yourself. You see why no man must marry me, and why I must go my own way, and bring the child up, alone."

The train jolted and jarred into a junction. Lathom went to the window, to guard it against a surge of passengers. He repulsed a phalanx of market women, and while he was occupied Jennifer Tremaine sat very still in her corner, rolling a handkerchief between her hands, and mustering her years of self-control to her service.

When they had moved on again, John Lathom leaned across to her once more.

"Look at me, Jennifer," he said.

She looked, and saw that, though his eyes were wet, his lips were smiling.

"I have a confession to make. I, no less than you, ran away to Cornwall to escape the eyes of the public."

"You! You have done nothing to be ashamed of."

"Nor have you, my poor dear. You are an innocent victim. Consider me one, too."

Her lips parted eagerly. She leaned forward.

"It is not possible that we two, together as we have been, can have suffered in the same way."

"Such a bond would make a difference, Jennifer, I think. It would bridge the gap. Say that it would. Admit it."

"I cannot bear to think you have gone through it," Jennifer said.

"But if I have?"

She paused a long time before she answered him.

"You and I—participating—understanding. Yes, it alters—it changes things," she whispered.

He crossed, and now he sat boldly beside her, and assumed the attitude of an accepted lover.

"Something happened to me two months ago," he said, "that has changed the current of my life. I got this from it." He twitched the wounded arm. "The newspaper men were at my heels, just as you have described them, Jennifer. I was hunted from pillar to post. I couldn't call my soul my own. And just as you fled to the far west country for refuge, I fled, with the whole pack of inquisitive brutes yelping after me."

"You must not tell me what it was," she said. "You have suffered, too. That is enough for me to know. I know how it hurts to speak, to have to recall these things."

"And yet, you insisted on telling *me!* The inconsistency of women!" He laughed out loud, boldly, pushing her despondency to one side. "You have to hear the sequel, though, because it concerns you. Yesterday morning, when I was wondering how a fellow with one hand could earn a living and support a wife—how, in fact, I could gain the right to ask you to marry me—a friend forwarded me a letter from America. It offered the directorship of a concern in one of the Western States. If you and the boy will go there with me, I think it will not be difficult to leave all of the past that troubles you on the other side of the ocean. You'll have changed your name, and, I dare say, we can find a new one to fit him. Does that way out please you, Jennifer?"

She thought him, as all true women desire and think their lover, the most

nobly masterful of men. Her gratitude rose in full flood, but there was a strange passion upon the crest of it. How could she have known that happiness would find her when she had been shut out from it so long? She raised her face to Lathom, and their lips met.

Three hours later the two arrived in London. The gayety of his fellow passengers had infected the blue blouse; he shouted for joy as the big station slid to his feet. People looked at him, amused, and from him to the handsome couple behind him.

"Johnny Lathom, dear old man!"

A tall, untidy man was shaking hands with Lathom.

"Steady, Worboise," said the happy lover, "I want to introduce you to my fiancée. Jennifer, I have tumbled across my best pal, my oldest friend, just as I was wishing he could know you."

Jennifer felt Worboise's eyes run over her critically. Approval followed his survey; and he nodded.

"Aye, aye. So that's what Johnny has been doing with his Cornish holiday! How is the hand?"

"The doctors were right. Fingers done for. But I'm not, I'm glad to say. I've an offer——"

"I know, I know! You'll be the first president of the Western Academy of Fine Arts. These Americans are too smart; they snap up the good things before the old country has its chance. Well, you've got yours, John Lathom, and you can be trusted to make the best of it."

"Oh!" cried Jennifer, suddenly awaking to knowledge. "Are you *that* John Lathom?"

"Didn't you know?" Worboise chuckled gleefully. "Well, that's just like Johnny. Run along, you humbug,

and snatch the luggage, while we wait here. Yes, that's John Lathom," he went on, as his friend's back receded into a press of porters, "and the most popular man in London, only it's as much as one's place is worth to let him hear it said."

"As a painter?" Jennifer faltered.

"Painter? Hum, not quite; though we all recognize what he might have become. No, but the man who set the streets cheering, the man who was mobbed for the heroism that lost him his painting hand, and might have cost him his life. Dear me, don't the London rags penetrate to your part of the world? They were full of John Lathom a little while ago. Burning house—firemen driven back—kids on a top story—up goes Johnny Lathom, and fetches 'em down, with the women fainting in the crowd underneath him, and death licking at him round the ladder. He was half killed, and when he was able to get about again he found he was a public idol. The papers had been running his sick bed for all they were worth. Lunatics broke into his studio, and carried off his brushes for mementoes, and idiots hung on his neck whenever he crossed his doorstep. You never saw a fellow so savage in your life. He bolted while they were still in full cry, and I was about the only man who knew where he had vanished to."

Lathom returned.

"Will you see if I have your things all right?" he said to Jennifer.

She had the boy by the hand. There was the country air about her, even in the smoky station. She stood holding her head high.

"I have been told," she said. "Oh, John, John!"

"Well?"

She did not speak. Her eyes shone, and they answered him.





A Reckless Bidder

By Jane W. Guthrie

TO a close observer, on a certain afternoon, Howes Minton, just returned from a long sojourn in countries where riotous living is not unknown, might have been waiting for some one to pass by as he stood at a window in the club which served as a lookout, though his pose was one of listless indifference. That he was doing this very thing was evinced in his abrupt departure as he noted the limousine of Judge Pomeroy, the husband of his cousin Milly, down the line of motors which often massed at this particular corner.

Hailing the driver, and with a gay salutation to the judge, he climbed into the motor with that measure of self-assurance which characterized him, and, settling down comfortably in the rugs, announced that he would bestow his company upon the judge and his cousin Milly that evening for dinner.

Now, Judge Pomeroy knew, not only his wife's private opinion of her cousin Howes, but also that Milly had suggested that they have a game of bridge that night with some neighbors, and the judge enjoyed nothing better than his bridge; but the impulses of hospitality were strong in him, and, though his lips twitched with a slightly embarrassed smile, as he remembered his wife, yet he accepted his self-imposed guest, and really found himself diverted, and rather delightfully so for the rest of the drive out home, by Minton's rattling chatter, his amusing tales—indeed, his amusing self-appreciation, even his light, shallow laugh.

Minton knew how to use his qualities to the very best advantage, when he exerted himself with an object in

view. Yet the judge, as he climbed the stairs to his wife's room in order to announce his guest, after establishing him comfortably by the library fire, with the best tobacco just at hand and a command to make himself at home, stepped softly, hesitatingly, it seemed, anticipating, it might be, with inward qualms, the strength of feminine prejudice.

Or it might have been that he was placing mentally a well-turned excuse or explanation of Minton's presence, or the demands of hospitality suited to feminine intellects; all swiftly discarded as unsatisfactory, for when he opened the door and faced his wife, he wore that half-guilty, slightly embarrassed look that bears on it a hint of defiance, which the best and bravest of husbands are apt to assume on occasions.

Mrs. Pomeroy stood at her dressing table, struggling with a refractory hook in the back of her gown. The atmosphere did not seem exactly satisfactory for excuse-making; but the judge advanced until he stood beside her, and, placing a gentle, even an appealing hand upon her shoulder, bent down and kissed her, as he said:

"My dear, I brought Howes Minton home for dinner with us. I am aware," he added, as Mrs. Pomeroy uttered a slight exclamation, "that you and I had made arrangements for going out this evening, but"—the judge smiled slightly, whimsically—"Minton is not one to be denied. He is very self-assured, and takes his welcome for granted with a certain exuberance which is rather refreshing, as well as amusing. An interesting talker, and I found that I quite enjoyed my ride out home, though generally I have little in common with idle

young men whose aim is chiefly pleasure and sport in the effort to spend money; but I was interested in your cousin this afternoon because of you. He wishes to speak to you, I believe, about the picture bequeathed you by your grandfather's will."

Mrs. Pomeroy turned swiftly, and looked in her husband's face.

"What about it?" she questioned curtly.

The hook might have been responsible for the stiffening of Milly's back, but the judge thought not.

"Our talk," he explained, "happened to turn upon the collection of paintings and objects of art which was left by your grandfather's bequest to the museum, with directions that you were to be given one of the most valuable of the pictures, and Howes another. Your cousin seems to think that since you are not satisfied with the one selected for you——"

"I never said so to him," interrupted Milly quickly.

The judge passed his hand across his brow a trifle ruefully.

"I believe, my dear," he confessed, "that I told him so. I am sorry I did so, if you would rather that I had not."

"No—no!" Mrs. Pomeroy reassured the judge. "I understand Howes' little fashion of abstracting any information that he desires. But what is he after now?"

"Well——" There was a hint of mild reproach in the judge's tones. "He said that he thought it a great shame that you did not have a picture you cared for; that such was your grandfather's wish and intention, but that it was scarcely to be hoped with the executors chosen by him—good, sound business men, but certainly not art critics. He was very amusing over the fact that they took the list of pictures and the prices paid for them, and, choosing the one that cost the most money, gave it to you."

"A great many people value pictures by the amount of money they cost. I believe my cousin Howes does," Mrs. Pomeroy assured her husband.

"Minton spoke most considerately of

you, my dear," the judge reproved. "He thought that you should be satisfied; and he offered to see the board of directors of the museum, or to try and arrange the matter with the executors of your grandfather's will, so that you could have just the picture that you wanted most. I thought it a very good idea, and that Minton was most generous in his offer. He spoke so admiringly and affectionately of you that I was quite pleased. You are dissatisfied with the picture given you, and your cousin being anxious to help you effect a change, I see no reason to be distrustful of him."

The judge was speaking to the mutinous expression on his wife's face, the scornful turn to the lips which she apparently made no effort to restrain.

"How cleverly Howes puts it!" she said, after a while. "How very thoughtful of him! And it is most unusual to find him so. And what is he going to do about his own picture? You know that my grandfather did not really leave Howes one of his paintings." Milly smiled a bit complacently, the judge feared. "Grandfather knew my cousin's peculiarities of temperament, shall we say? He left him only money, and advised him to get through with it as soon as possible and take to work. I think Howes is patiently following his advice, though I have doubts about the work. Howes would use his wits instead of his hands or effort. Grandmother gave Howes his picture. She was permitted to take what she wished, and she gave Howes one of those she chose. As it happens, he has the one picture in the whole collection that I really care to have. But I wouldn't hurt the feelings of the men who made my choice for anything. They were grandfather's best friends, and they were so sure that they were doing the thing that I would most appreciate. They thought they were giving me the most valuable picture in the collection, and it did cost the most money at the time it was bought. Grandfather did not pay much for the one Howes has, but it is lovely, and—I did want it dreadfully."

"Why not make the change, then, as Howes suggests?" the judge asked, in astonishment.

Mrs. Pomeroy wheeled about quickly and looked at her husband, as he seated himself in a chair by her fire.

"Did Howes suggest that I change with him?" she asked, looking searchingly, inquiringly at him.

"I believe he did—at least I received some such impression. He said, I think, that rather than have you not entirely satisfied with your legacy that he would give you his own. He spoke most feelingly of your childhood days, your long association in and about your grandfather's home; and seemed to be perfectly disinterested, I thought."

"Well!" Mrs. Pomeroy sat down in her chair for a moment's thought. "No—no," she said finally. "I make no holidays for Howes Minton." Her assertion was positive.

"I do not like to think of you as suspicious, Milly." Her husband spoke with veiled impatience.

Milly Pomeroy walked over slowly, and, placing a hand on each of his shoulders, searched the judge's face with amused but tender eyes. Then, as her gaze dwelt upon his benevolent yet judicial countenance: "You poor dear!" she exclaimed sympathetically. "Why try to understand Howes? You are only a child in his hands, though you are a judge on the bench. Think what joy it would be to my cousin to show off my picture to his friends! Imagine how gently he would insinuate that it was his because of a consideration kindly and generously bestowed! Or, perhaps, through his fervid imagination, I might even have presented it to him in adoring appreciation of his many remarkable qualities. But make up your mind, my dear, that Howes is not thinking of me in any way; he is thinking solely of Howes Minton."

Milly laughed in pure amusement; there was not a taint of malice or spite in her clear laughter, yet the judge turned away in evident annoyance. Minton's fascinations, whatever they were, seemed to have cast a spell over him.

"Milly—Milly," he murmured, a faint shadow of distress on his fine countenance, "recrimination and distrust are my daily diet downtown; don't let me find them in my home. I dislike to think of you misjudging your cousin. I was much pleased with him this afternoon. He has not much depth of character, I grant you, and is of a light and frivolous nature, but I am sure that he does not willfully misrepresent things, and he certainly seemed to have an affectionate regard for you."

Milly leaned down, and rubbed her cheek against her husband's.

"He has?" she questioned. "Well, sometimes I have intuitions about people and motives, when I may seem to mis-judge them."

"Intuition, my dear"—the judge's convictions on this subject were temperamental—"is the mother of prejudice, and not to be trusted. Reason and fact should be our only guides."

"Oh, wise judge! Oh, excellent young man!" murmured Milly, her arm about her husband's neck, as she drew his head close and kissed the top of it. He took her hand and kissed it gravely, as he shook his head a bit sadly. "Suppose," Milly urged, "that I show you reason and facts."

Then she rose from the arm of her husband's chair, where she had been sitting, with a smile upon her face. The judge also rose, but his face was grave.

"Your cousin is waiting downstairs for us, my dear," he said, "while we are up here discussing him most uncharitably. If you will permit me to arrange your gown in the back for you we'll go down as soon as possible."

Mrs. Pomeroy presented a stiffly uncompromising back to her husband, while her generous mouth hardened, and her straight little nose went up in the air, as she tossed her head slightly. She was about thirty-five, very few years younger than her husband, though she looked many, for the judge was grave and sedate, and Mrs. Pomeroy's quick, nervous movements bespoke an eager, alert, even inquisitive mind, and were in direct contrast to her husband, whose grave, studious countenance,

with the thoughtful eyes, bespeak the student rather than the quick observer, the sharp diviner.

When the hook was safely adjusted, Mrs. Pomeroy turned to her husband with one of her quick little movements, and, taking his face in her hands, gazed at him with a sort of mock dismay.

"You are troubled because you think that I am ill-natured, are you not? And that will not do at all." She rubbed her cheek affectionately against his in that gesture of her own which always pleased and placated him. "I am going to show you that I am not. Howes, and you, and I, with one of the neighbors for whom I shall send, will give you a game of bridge this evening, and we'll make it auction bridge. You shan't be deprived of your promised game."

The judge's face brightened.

"I often feel," he conceded, "the need of a mental contest—one without words, a quiet, calm, intellectual struggle, after listening to strident voices and the clamor of human stress all day."

And in this mood of benignant gratitude, the judge found himself gazing at his wife with admiration not entirely unmixed with puzzled wonderment when Milly gave her cousin a cordial greeting, and exerted herself during dinner to promote the spirit of gayety, even confidential intimacy, though she teased Howes about the pictures, while she enlivened both of the men with reminiscent tales of the childhood of her cousin and herself. Perhaps this was why the judge found himself watching his guest with a keener appreciation of his wife's estimate than he had before dinner thought possible.

With a light, agreeable manner, even a fascinating one, when he chose to exert himself, Minton cultivated the social instincts assiduously; but his eyes, under the judge's contemplative gaze, revealed themselves now as of a pale, bluish-green color, and he had a fashion of veiling them with long, light lashes that gave him the aspect of looking at one through a mist; his most noticeable characteristic, however, was a trick of talking out of the corner of

his mouth, a habit that had never commended itself to Judge Pomeroy as indicative of a straightforward disposition. Tall and thin, with dust-colored hair and complexion, he had nothing positive about him, rather a suggestion of secrecy which was baffling, and which was heightened apparently by design; a direct contrast to his cousin Milly, who was as clear and direct as daylight, as sunshine, or a flashing fountain.

"But if I send my picture over to your house so that you can arrange the transfer, how am I to be sure that I will ever see its substitute?" questioned Mrs. Pomeroy banteringly, her head held on one side as she gazed at her cousin with mocking laughter in the eyes that afterward drooped pathetically as she declared: "I haven't forgotten my precious little turquoise ring, given me by my grandfather when I was ten years old. I loved that little ring," she explained to her husband; "it was as blue and sweet as the summer sky, and I called it my 'color guard,' and amused myself by thinking that it brought me good luck. Howes insisted that he wanted to share my good luck, and coaxed my ring away from me, and I never saw it again." She turned to her cousin reproachfully. "I believe you said that you gave it to another little girl."

Minton twisted farther down in his chair, and thrust his hands into his pockets in a gleeful malice of reminiscent mirth.

"I believe I did," he acknowledged. "I suppose that I wanted to give that little girl a present, and was hard up. I've always been hard up," he complained plaintively, thrusting out empty hands. "I must have been born so."

Milly Pomeroy's long, steady look at her cousin was keenly questioning, then her eyes dropped upon her husband's mystified countenance, and she smiled amusedly.

The judge was genuinely mystified. He seemed to be witnessing a duel between these two, or the preparation rather for one. Beneath this atmosphere of good-fellowship these cousins stood on guard with the foils off the

ripiers, watchfully, warily distrustful of each other, and waiting some signal for parry and thrust in deadly earnest, duplicating, perhaps, mentally, the physical encounters of their childhood days. He could feel an underplay in all of those laughing words, those significant allusions.

Minton, however, seemed willing, eager to make almost any concession. Could Milly's intuitions have more in them than he had imagined? Was Minton's flattery of his cousin, his air of good-humored deference, genuine? The judge asked himself these questions over and over.

It was at the bridge table after dinner, however, that he registered a revised edition of his estimate of Minton, for his guest had all of the traits most shunned by the real bridge player in partner or opponent; so clearly indicative, as they are, of the way that he plays his game of life. He was never still, and his irritating crowings over a defeated opponent, his gleefully expressed opinions of his own prowess when he chanced to score game or fulfill his obligations, his belief in his own invincible luck, and his teasing laughter; in fact, his supreme self-conceit and utter indifference to any thought of consideration for his partner, in that he continually skirted the edges of gambling, taking chances which often led to ignominious defeat, denied all claims of the table at large, and footed up, on unfulfilled contracts, appallingly, for his partner.

The judge, however, never lost his temper nor failed in courtesy, though Milly did occasionally, and the neighbor brought in to fill up, with an appreciation of Minton's instinct for bidding whether he had a warrant for it or not, was reduced almost to the verge of a wordy outbreak.

The ethics of the game as played by the judge and his friends had disappeared, and Milly laughed aloud when the neighbor, after an hour or two, rose from his chair, with an explosive snort as he said to Minton:

"I've had enough. That's the only hand you've had this evening that justi-

fied bidding. One might call you a perpetual bidder, Mr. Minton," he added, almost gruffly.

"A reckless bidder," remarked the judge succinctly, though Minton, in the hand just played, had merely illustrated persistence in getting his own way, and it had been well worth while, Milly thought, to watch his effort.

The judge was dealer, playing with his wife, Milly, and on a rubber game with a score of nothing to sixteen against him; holding, ace, eight, seven, four of hearts; eight, three of diamonds; ace, ten, nine, four, three, two of clubs; and knave of spades, he bid "one club."

Second hand holding queen, knave of hearts; queen, ten of diamonds; queen, eight, seven, six of clubs; and seven, six, four, three, two of spades, said: "No."

Third hand, held by Milly with king, ten, nine, three of hearts; four of diamonds; king, five of clubs; and king, queen, ten, nine, eight, five of spades, bid "two spades," by way of information.

Howes, the fourth hand, holding six, five, two of hearts; ace, king, knave, nine, seven, six, five, two of diamonds; knave of clubs; and the ace of spades, bid "one diamonds."

On the second round, the judge said: "No." Second hand again also refused to bid for the lead; but Milly, third hand, bid "two clubs," in an evident effort to encourage her husband to go "no trumps."

Howes promptly raised his bid of diamonds, making it "two diamonds." On the third round, the judge again refused to bid, so also the second hand, but Milly— She had been watching her husband with eyes that shone, admiring his restraint; but he must bid for that hand, the game must be his and hers, and as she saw "no trumps" was out of the question, she bid "two hearts."

Howes promptly said "three diamonds," his slant, bluish-green eyes narrowing beneath their shielding lashes as he quickly scanned the other players,

and settled nervously farther down in his chair.

The judge was imperturbable. He had all of the information that Milly could give him as to her power to help him. He bid "three hearts." Second hand again said "No." Milly also refused now, but Howes determinedly said "four diamonds," his face paling under the strain as he bit his thin lips in excitement.

Milly's heart was going like a trip hammer and pounding in her ears. Surely the judge would rise to the convention. He did so without the faintest shadow of hurry or strain. He said quietly "four hearts," and the lead was Milly's, while Howes settled back sulkily in his chair.

It was a beautiful hand, and when Mrs. Pomeroy had turned in five tricks and won the rubber, she leaned across the table, and said to her cousin:

"I can't help flapping my wings, Howes. You deserve to be beaten at that hand, for you've done enough damage to-night, by reckless bidding, to merit revenge."

"Oh, well"—he tossed the inference aside with a gesture of his long, thin hands—"one can't hope to win all of the time. You've got to let other people have a chance now and then." He spoke boastfully, patronizingly, his thin laughter echoing with a shallow tinkle.

Milly laughed outright, clear, ringing laughter.

"It is a good thing, Howes, to let other people have their chance when they know how to take it. You always forget the other person, Howes," she reproved, with light mockery. "Here's a piece of advice for you. You won't take it to heart, I know, but it is worth while. Don't fail to remember that the other person has just as much sense, generally speaking, as you have, often more; that he is apt to have just as much knowledge, if not more than you; just as much perspicacity as yourself, even more sometimes, and an even amount of selfishness. Give the other person credit for more of everything than yourself, and bid and play accordingly, Howes, and you'll come out ahead

oftener; you won't be so often—hard up—shall we say?" Milly beamed upon her cousin sweetly. "Now," she said, as the judge, who had been talking to the neighbor, walked out of earshot, "what about the pictures?"

Minton gazed contemplatively at his cousin through the mist of his eyelashes.

"Purely a desire to do you a good turn, give you a picture that you would like to have, and relieve you of one that you do not value particularly," spreading out his hands in a gesture of surprise that she should question it.

"And you want me to send my picture over to your house?" She shook her head. "No—no; I remember my turquoise ring."

"Pshaw!" Minton spoke impatiently. "How childish!"

"But I don't forget it. I think I'll keep my picture."

"Why, that's foolish, perfectly absurd of you! Why, here I am willing to help you to a better thing. I'd even exchange mine with you if it would please you more."

"You are willing to make an exchange with me, though you know that my picture cost more money than yours?" She laughed up at him through shining eyes.

"But," he objected, "the judge said that you had never liked yours, and that—"

"I do like yours. I always have liked it. Had I been given my choice I would have taken it," she said softly, a bit wistfully.

"Then we'll make an even exchange," he urged eagerly, a trifle excitedly, it seemed to his cousin; "and if you would prefer, we'll make the transfer here before the judge. I'll give it to you in writing if you say so."

His eyes were gleaming, and there was even a note of agitation in his voice as he explained the transfer to the judge who had come back into the room, and turned now to his wife in surprise. She, however, had her eyes fixed upon her cousin, and the judge noted that there was the shining of mockery in them,

and the curve of irony on her sweet lips. He sighed.

The next morning bright and early the expressman brought Minton's picture to Mrs. Pomeroy's door, with a written order to fetch hers in exchange, and Mrs. Pomeroy sent it. It was nearly noon, however, when the judge telephoned to his wife from downtown.

"Milly," he questioned, and there seemed a note of agitation, even apology in his tones, "you have that written transfer given you last night by your cousin?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Well, the directors of the museum have just been here to see me. They have asked about the picture which belonged to you, and is now being offered to them for sale by Howes Minton. He made arrangement, yesterday, with them to sell them one of your grandfather's pictures. They supposed that it was the one in his possession at the time of the offer; and they find it is yours, given him last night in exchange

for his. And, Milly"—the judge's voice grew more apologetic; he hesitated a moment—"the curator of the museum tells me that it is unfortunate for Howes that he made the exchange, but that you have benefited greatly by reason of the fact that the artist of your former picture has lost his vogue, and his paintings have depreciated in value, while the one now in your possession has greatly appreciated in value, and that they would offer you fifteen thousand for it any time you would consider it."

"I had an intuition last night"—Milly's voice seemed to quiver with laughter and excitement—"that Howes was hard up and needed some money."

"But you—you had no previous knowledge of this?"

"Oh, dear me, no! But I know Howes." She laughed lightly, her voice floating back over the wire with a tantalizing whisper in it. "A reckless bidder," she said, "often bids against himself."



ON A FLY LEAF

THESE are my blooms I send to you,
I kiss them ere they start.
My love is singing where they grew,
Deep down within my heart.

Unlike the blossoms bought and sold,
That live but for a day,
You cannot purchase them for gold,
Nor give one flower away.

The mystery behind their birth
Is far from human ken,
'Tis deeper than the springs of mirth,
Beyond the tears of men.

FREDERICK TRUESDELL.

THE PREACHING OF KNUD ERICKSON



By
Cornelia A.P. Comer

KNUD ERICKSON came into the living room of his ranch house, out of the dense, close-clinging, white fog of a November night. Ingeborg, his wife, sat by the fireplace, sewing. The lamp was lighted, there was a pleasant fire burning on the hearth, the room was warm and homelike. It suggested security and rest, and in Inga's calm face, as she turned it toward him, was an even stronger assurance of domestic peace. But this was not Knud Erickson's need.

He had been walking the river road in the white stillness of the fog, listening to the mighty tide of the swollen Columbia racing to the sea, and to the soughing of the wind in the monster firs. For it is now twenty years since that November night, and the Pacific Northwest had then scarcely begun to be despoiled of its magnificent garment of forests, the most wonderful that ever lay on any land beneath the sun. The whispering treetops were so far above his head that the branches seemed to be communing with each other in another world from the troubled one where Knud Erickson walked and took counsel with his soul.

He knew what he had to do, but, for Ingeborg's sake, he dreaded the doing. Ingeborg loved this new country, this land of the great snow peaks, of the mighty river, of the enormous trees and the fertile soil. She liked her neighbors, also, and the place she held among them. One of them, Gina Blomberg,

was born near her old home in Vermilion, and they had early memories in common. Ingeborg counted Gina her friend—and she who has married a prophet has need of women friends.

Knud's orchards were prosperous, and so were his acres of wheat. All things were going well with them, and a beautiful place was shaping itself about them. He had been far from poor when he came to the Northwest country, and his wealth was growing fast. But, as Ingeborg knew, his wealth was his least concern. She valued it more than he, for she knew that it meant peace—at least it would have spelled peace for her had she been the wife of another man. But Knud was what he was, and, doubtless, what he had to do must be done—because he thought it must. Herself, she did not see the necessity! But Ingeborg was no weakling. She recognized that for this man who lived beside her, the necessity was absolute.

Knud Erickson was in the grasp of a compelling fate; he was bent and twisted by those old-fashioned but still potent forces—remorse and the passion for righteousness. Ingeborg shared neither emotion very keenly—her own strong feelings were along different lines—but, like many wives, she covered with silence her sense of the utter futility of her husband's point of view. For Knud's point of view was his life. She had seen it grow upon him, and she knew. Therefore, of what use to speak against it?

But she remembered Knud's fine, lovable youth; she remembered his forceful, if faulty, manhood that he now felt so blurred and dishonored, and she resented what the penitent years had wrought in him. Holding his past and present in her heart, she disbelieved in his point of view with all her soul, and with all her soul, also, she turned her Scandinavian intensity to hiding her disbelief, and to creating a semblance of content where no content was.

When Ingeborg lifted her quiet eyes to Knud's face as he came in this night, she saw that his hour had struck. She shivered a little. It would be less hard to bear what was coming if only she felt sure that Knud was a well man. To the casual eye he bulked as a powerful figure, having a certain majestic might according to his type, but Ingeborg had seen too often the pinched look around his nostrils and the dark, bloodless aspect of his face when the pain caught hard at his heart not to fear for him. Knud laughed at her terrors as womanish, and refused to go down to a doctor in Portland. So she took what care for his bodily welfare he permitted, and held her wifely tongue.

The man came forward to the fireplace, stretching his hands to the blaze. The fire found a resin pocket in the backlog, and the flames leaped up gayly to welcome him, but he looked back at them austerely, with preoccupied eyes.

"Ingeborg, it iss time that I preach again," he said.

The woman lifted a dumb, patient face. If it was time, it was. Nothing she could say would make it otherwise, and vain gabbling she despised. But Knud's preaching meant a long train of consequences. She had lived through them before. This was the third church whose mortgage Knud had purchased, to the end that he might speak in the House of God as though he were speaking at his own hearthstone, and might tell his neighbors freely what was in the depths of his heart. It was only so that Knud Erickson found himself free to preach—to deliver the message that was his to give because it was the

one big thing he had learned from life.

His method of procedure was simplicity itself. He lived in each community in which he went until his neighbors knew him for an honest man and one of good intent. Otherwise, he asked himself, what influence could he have with them? When the time was ripe for him to speak, he knew it. These preliminary seasons were always Ingeborg's good years. To be respected, to be at peace, to give justice and to receive it—this was her happiness. But these years were never long enough.

The neighbors were always loquacious and reproachful when Knud foreclosed a mortgage; and loquacious and sympathetic, with a sympathy that was gall to Ingeborg, once the sermon was accomplished. As for Knud, he was silent and depressed for weeks before his preaching, and utterly exhausted for weeks after it. Always, when it was over, they moved on, farther west, to a new field and a new audience. Once Knud had spoken his word, a community was a sucked orange to him. Ingeborg hungered for permanency in her home, as she did for peace or comfort. Also, she was as reticent by nature as she was proud—but a prophet must go to and fro, and must bare his heart to the people if he would make them heed him.

Ingeborg bit her lips now until the blood came, but she only looked up, and asked:

"When iss it you preach, Knud?"

"Next Sunday week, I t'ink. A student from Portland has the services on Sunday. He will gif my notice, so those who wish to hear may know to come."

Ingeborg drew a sighing breath. Then she rose quickly to her feet, and put a warm, capable hand on his chilled ones.

"You haf been out in the fog all day," she said reprovingly. "I will give you to eat. You are cold an' wet. That iss no way for you to be."

Knud Erickson's church stood back from the river road in a natural glade of the fir forest. Tall trees grew close about the sides of it, but at the front it

looked out across cleared land to the high vision of Mt. Hood, magnificent in a garment of silver. The building was squat and white, bare and plain, but it was better so, for there was in its environment a beauty so compelling and august that it made any human endeavor at adornment look pitiful.

The day appointed for Knud Erickson's preaching was in December, but in the night the wind turned benignly into the north and blew away the low-lying rain clouds; the day broke unbelievably bright for December. The air was clear, the snow peaks dazzlingly visible. The preacher paused as he was entering his church, to look wistfully about. If only men would use their eyes in this wonder country, no one need preach to them.

The church had been built for a neighborhood meeting place, but the scattered ranchers who erected it had not cherished it sufficiently to pay off the small incumbering debt. Nevertheless, Knud's foreclosure of the mortgage had brought forth sharp comment on "the eternal graspingness of them Swedes." But up and down the river shore, from the ranches, the lumber camps, the sawmill, the near-by villages, a congregation had assembled when it was made known that the man who had bought the church purposed to speak in it once only. There was a dramatic something about the notion that appealed to them.

They were a varied crowd—the sober-minded ranchers, with their tired, serious wives; the men from the camps, rough, and not without the intention of getting some fun out of the Swede's preaching if events pointed that way. But they were all curious, and their curiosity would keep them quiet for a time.

There was nothing about the sight of Knud Erickson in the pulpit to offend their sense of fitness. He was a tall, powerfully built man of fifty, slightly bent, with a square head, high cheek bones, sharply cut features, and fiercely blue eyes set deep under an overhanging forehead. The sight of him carried conviction that here was a

man such as they were when the world was younger, and it was a simpler and more important matter to be a man than now.

The people assembled early. The church was soon full to the doors. While the congregation was coming in, Knud, with Ingeborg at his side, sat quietly in the front pew. The woman was very still. Her nobly shaped head was lifted high, her broad shoulders thrown back, her lips set in a hard, rebellious line, her eyes fixed steadily on the pulpit.

When at last there were no more arrivals, the man rose and walked to the platform. He had not arranged for singing, and he offered no prayer. He had not assembled these people for worship, but for instruction, and he thought too highly of what he had to tell them and too meanly of himself, to imitate the ordinary forms of service. Only he opened the big Bible on top of the desk, and, turning the leaves slowly, found and read aloud one passage:

"If a soul sin and trespass against the Lord . . . in any of all these things that a man doeth, sinning therein . . . he shall bring his trespass offering before the Lord."

A hush deepened over his audience. He struck a different note from any they had expected. For what they had come they did not know, but it was not for this.

Though his face quivered with feeling and his eyes were liquid with the curious blue fire that burns only in Swedish eyes, his speech was restrained and temperate. He began with homely familiarity:

"I bought this church. You wonder why? I come here this morning to tell you. I did it because I wanted a chanst to tell you *what I t'ink*. In this world we do not listen to our neighbors when they speaks to us of the big t'ings. If I meet Pete Olsen on the street down in La Camas an' start in to tell him all these t'ings what iss in my mind, do you t'ink he listens? Not him! He gets away from me, an' goes off up street to get a drink. But if I wants to tell him those t'ings so much I buy

a church an' get up here before you, you all say somet'ing like this: 'What for that fool Swede want to talk to us so much he pay nine hundred dollars for the chanst? Guess I go listen to his nine-hundred-dollar talk!' So, you come. You are here. I pray you hear me to the end!

"Do you know how it seems to me? Nobuddy ever tells another what he t'inks. In our hearts we all t'ink alike—the good t'oughts God puts in the hearts of men. But Ole, he says: 'Well, I don't see nobuddy actin' like what my heart tells me I should act. I guess what other mens do iss good 'nough for me.' Jon, he says same t'ing to himself. But all the time—in our hearts we know!"

"What are the t'ings we know? That it iss not good to drink, to roister, to lie, to steal, to be unclean—Pfui! There iss somet'ing shines white in every man's heart—white like a lily—white like Mount Hood over there in the sun. Somet'ing says: 'O man, rise up! Hold up your head! Stand like the mountain stands, white before our God. But if you fall an' cannot stand, rise again. Try—an' try—die trying if you must!'

"But yoost because no man tells his neighbor what iss in his heart, we all do low-down, common t'ings, an' say: 'Well, what's good 'nough for Ole to do iss good 'nough for me.' It ain't! By the living Lord! There ain't not'ing too good for you an' me to be an' to do. That's the word of the Lord to us all.

"Do you understand me? It iss so easy to understand! Yet a man must be broken in the mill before he knows it for himself, before he dares to tell.

"Now, this iss what happened to me—me, Knud Erickson. The Lord says to tell you. Here iss my life. It iss for you to say if it means not'ing to you.

"When I come from the old country, I settle in Minnesota, like lots of Swedes. I take land from the agent of the steamboat company. It iss good land. First year, my wife an' me, we live in a shack with a shed. Next year I borrow money an' build a barn. Next

year I pay for it. Four—five year goes by. I own my place. My wife an' I, we have one little girl, Ronhilda. Only one—but so sweet, so pretty. I don't need to tell anybuddy what we t'ink about our Ronhilda, do I? We are all alike in that!

"Years go by, smooth enough. I prosper. I t'ink I am pretty good man—but pretty good iss not good enough!

"Once in a while I drink when I go to town. My head iss hard. It don't seem to hurt me much. I drink a little more. I buy alcohol like my neighbors, mix it with water, an' sometimes I drink. No, I don't get drunk often. I am too busy. I see, myself, all the time, I get a little harder, not so fine, somehow not so quick, not so gentle. Ingeborg says I get cross easy. An' always I care to make money, care more an' more. About many other t'ings I don't care so much as I did. It iss as if a knife blade get dull—do you see? But, rather, as if that knife iss the only tool I haf in all the world, an' not another can I get, an' yet I let the edge go dull! I don't t'ink much about it. But the knife blade gets duller an' duller!

"I didn't know then—but now I know; that I drink iss not sin; that I make money iss not sin—but that I let the blade grow dull!"

The man leaned out over the little pulpit, intent upon the faces below him. This symbol of the sharpened blade meant so much to him. In it he had wrapped all of his passionate, belated apprehension of the absolute beauty of righteousness and its absolute necessity to human living. It brought to himself such a picture of the willing, disciplined body at the glad service of the aspiring soul, told so vividly of the sacred duty of keeping the soul's only instrument unimpaired, that, to his own apprehension, his words were darting flames. But his congregation sat beneath them quietly, listening but impassive. Knud Erickson went on:

"I get so I care not much for anything except to make money. By an' by my brother Leif, he goes out to Butte. He gets big money working in

a mine, an' he begins to pick up claims. He gets one—two claims what he t'inks iss dirt cheap, an' he writes me to come out an' go into mining with him. So I sell my place, an' we go. Some of the money I puts into mortgages and gives to my wife, but some I put into the Bright Head Mine with Leif. We work it togedder, an' strike a good lode. I grow more crazy to be rich. Pretty soon an English company alongside wants to buy our claim. We hold off, an' hold off. Our ore gets better an' better. By an' by they offer eighty t'ousand dollars to buy us out, an' we take it. Forty t'ousand dollars apiece where we put in four t'ousand! My head goes round. I come home—tell my wife—tell Ronhilda. She iss a grown girl by now, so slender an' tall, with hair like gold an' a skin as white as her t'oughts. It iss like I am mad with joy.

"I say: 'We celebrate.' Ingeborg shakes her head, but I say: 'Yes.' So we get evryt'ing to eat, an' lots to drink, an' ask in many folks. We eat. We drink. Late at night our neighbors go an' leave us. I say to my wife: 'A bottle more! I am a rich man. I drink this night what I choose.' Our Ronhilda, she says: 'Oh, father, no! I do not like to drink. My head aches like to split, an' the room goes round. I must go to bed.'

"But by this time I am crazy with the drink an' the money, an' knowing there iss more drink an' more money. So I hold a glass to Ronhilda's lips, an' say: 'Drink to your father what iss one rich man now! Drink!' Ronhilda, she fights me off, but I am like I was clean out of my mind, an' I make her drink. Then I drink some more, an' I make Ingeborg drink, an' we fall down on the floor like beasts, an' sleep there all night.

"In the morning—what? I wake up, an' hear Ingeborg breathe so heavy, so heavy. My eyes smart, my head aches. My t'roat iss dry. I t'ink: 'If this iss all to being a rich man, it ain't much.' Then I see how white Ronhilda looks. I can't hear her breathe. I am scared. I forget how bad I feel, an' I crawl over

to where she iss lying on the sofa, her face to the window. I touch her hand. It iss cold—oh, my God, it iss cold!

"How shall I tell you such a t'ing? I had killed my girl, my little Ronhilda, with feasting and drinking. Maybe it was that last glass I made her take, maybe not. The doctor would not say. Nobuddy held me responsible. But do you t'ink I did not know? They don't call it murder. They don't punish me. But the Lord, He has punished. Did I ask for riches an' no child? The hearts of the fathers know!

"So—what was left? The money an' the heartache."

In the little church there was heavy silence. Knud Erickson's audience was not impassive now. He had told them things that pierced to the deep places. No eye wandered from his face, but only Ingeborg, motionless, expressionless, intent, noted that his face had grown gray and dark, that his nostrils were contracted and his breath came hard. But he could not stop yet. There was more that must be said.

"The money an' the heartache," he repeated, "an', by an' by, this t'ought. I say to myself: 'Knud Erickson, your life iss over. Never shall t'ings be with you as before. You haf spoiled the temper of your life so the cutting edge cannot be made sharp again. But it iss not too late for other mens. Tell your neighbor, so he will not do like you. Save him the sin, save him the pain—if you can!'"

To yearn toward the vision of right living only when it is too late—to know one can never live like *that* oneself, yet to desire it above all desires for other, happier natures—that is the real passion of the prophet, and it blazed from Knud Erickson's face until his hearers understood. He was transformed before their gaze. This was a soul in pain, a prophet transfigured, a leader and teacher of men.

"Sometimes it comes to me," he said brokenly, "how beautiful men's lives would be if all were good. To do honest work, to make a quiet home for the wife an' little ones, to look at the beautiful world, and t'ink the white t'oughts

the dear Lord sends—is not that like Heaven? An' it might be so for all. Do I make you understand?"

He looked from face to face, deep into the eyes of every man before him, searching out their souls, and every man looked back as if Knud spoke to him alone. His simple vision of man redeemed had touched them in the quick, and the knowledge of this was borne back to him, as such things may be. He drew a deep breath of relief.

"I t'ank God that you understand! For it iss hard to tell you all I haf told. But tell you I must. I am a driven man. I live but to tell these t'ings. It iss not enough that I know what I know. You must know also. You—an' you—an' you. For this I put my heart under your feet.

"Did I wish to bring shame on myself in your eyes, an' make my name a laughing on your lips? No! But I do it that I may make you t'ink! Iss it clear to you now as it iss to me?"

"Not often do mens mean to steal—to kill—no more than me. The terrible t'ings comes on us slow. They creep—a little, an' a little. We go wrong in our hearts—a little, an' a little. Then, all at once, the end! *I know.* Don't be as me! Do not'ing, not'ing that will dull your blade!"

"I am a driven man. Happiness iss no more for me. Except—I am happy if I make you understand. It iss—my—trespass offering—before the Lord and—"

He faltered. His breath came harder, and his face grew strange. He stepped back, and fell across the pulpit chairs, gasping for air.

Ingeborg leaped from her seat. She knew that she had unconsciously expected this for years, and that the hour she had blindly dreaded was upon her. She knelt at her husband's side, and lifted his head to her deep breast.

"Knud! Knud!" she cried, with the passion of a wife, the tenderness of a mother, but his ears were already deaf to her call. She chafed his hands. His eyes opened slowly once, looked long into hers, and the lids fell.

It was the cruel climax of her bitter

years, and she rebelled. She cast one wild look backward on the people, now awkwardly pressing about her, and spoke her mind out for the first time in all her mature life.

"It iss foolishness what he has told you! For he iss a good man. Nefer haf I known a man so good. Bot' when he was young and now he iss young no more. An' if he dies, he dies for you!" she cried, with a terrible scorn. "*Are you wort' it?*"

They fell back abashed before her eyes, her gesture, her white-hot words. And she took her dead in her strong arms, and cherished him.

On a sparkling February afternoon two months after Knud Erickson's death, Gina Blomberg sought her widowed friend to have serious speech with her. She found her wrapped in a shawl, pacing the long veranda at the back of the ranch house. It gave upon the river, bright in the winter sunshine, and the mountains, dazzling in their whiteness. As Ingeborg walked, her eyes were on Mt. Hood.

The little community of Ingeborg's neighbors had heard with surprised approval that she would live on among them at the ranch on the Columbia. They had not expected it. She was rich enough, and free. She might live anywhere. She might go where it would be easier to forget.

"But it iss good sense," pronounced Eric Blomberg. "In ten year that ranch will be wort' a fortune."

"It iss not because it iss good sense that she does it," Gina returned, "an' I am not sure it iss best for her. Eric, don't you see she looks ten year older alrefty?"

"Why not? Her man iss dead."

Gina shook her head. She had doubts of Ingeborg's wisdom, though never of her powers of endurance. It was to express her doubts that she had come this afternoon. Finding Ingeborg on the veranda, she sat down on a bench outside the door and regarded her.

"Ingeborg, I come to tell you I t'ink you best go away for a while."

Ingeborg indicated the vista of river and mountain with her hand.

"Iss it a place to leave?" she asked.

"But you are not well. You don't look like yourself. I t'ink it hurt you to stay here. Eric an' me, we worry."

The widow shook her head. Her lips opened, then closed again. The decent silence that had always seemed to her the only fitting shelter for one's griefs and sins was doubly precious to her now, in this place where the veil had been torn from her life. But Gina had spent nights and days whole-heartedly in her service since the day of her bereavement. Gina was a real friend, and she owed her something—perhaps, even, the free expression of herself that was, she knew, the only thing that would satisfy the other's warm and anxious heart. So she sat down beside Gina, drew a long breath, and opened her lips again. The words came haltingly.

"Gina, I tell you how it iss wit' me if I can. It iss very bad how I feel. It tears me somet'ing cruel. But so t'ings iss. We bear them as we can. You see, I did not look to be happy after Ronhilda died, but always I wanted peace, an' to forget. Always I wanted Knud to be still, to take what the good Lord had sent, to bear it, to say not'ing. An' always he felt it was laid on him to preach from his heart, to tell mens about us. I could not bear that he do it. But to Knud I say not'ing. To myself I say: 'What good iss it to preach? The dear Lord, He taught us. Shall He not teach the others, too? It is His affair!'

"Now, Knud's life iss spent, and I feel the same, an' yet not the same. An' I am torn between two ways. If he had not preached, it iss years he might haf lived, an' much good he might haf done. T'ink of the money to use! T'ink, too, of my life. I was so hungry to forget! Was not Ronhilda the child of my body? Haf mothers no grief? But Knud, he would not forget. He saw t'ings as he had to see. Mens do. So he preached. An' now it iss over. They call him the Preaching

Swede. They remember for one mont' or two what he said. They remember his name for a year or two—then it iss all gone! He shall haf died for no good. That I cannot bear. It must not be!

"Now, I haf t'ings my way for always. I haf peace. I haf money. I hear no more forever of our sin, of how Ronhilda died. I haf heard Knud's story for the last time. I shall hear it nefer again—not even at Judgment Day! But I haf no Knud. My heart broke while he lived, an' now he iss gone it breaks again. T'ings iss so. Nefer haf we it all."

The two wives looked far into each other's eyes.

"No, Ingeborg, nefer. Nefer haf we it all," the other woman breathed, and it was as if she pronounced the last word of experience and philosophy alike.

Ingeborg sat erect, staring blindly from her deep-blue eyes out across her fertile acres to the river's shore.

"Maybe it hurts me more to stay here," she said slowly, "maybe not. For now I haf no Knud, money iss not'ing, peace iss not'ing, an' pain, too, iss not'ing. If I stay here they will remember Knud a little longer—yoost a little. Efen if it iss only that they say: 'Ingeborg Erickson—yes. She iss the widow of the Preaching Swede. He died.' An' tell Knud's story so, an' tell his preaching. It will not be quite so soon forgot. So I stay. It iss my peace now that they remember, as once it was my peace that it should be forgot. One t'ing, too, I know. It tears me now, but it will not tear me always; because t'ings iss not so for me only. T'ings iss so for all."

The painfully uttered words rang in Gina's ears like tolling bells. They brought her she knew not what sudden sense, deep and wonderful, of the comfort of human oneness, of shared suffering. She wiped the slow tears from her eyes, answering as fervently as though she prayed:

"Yes, Ingeborg, yes! T'ings iss so for all!"



CÆSAR'S WIFE'S HUSBAND

FRANK CONDON

YOU might not believe it, and that's because you're a tired, old cynic, but there was a time when Millicent would lean out of the window and cheerfully defy every known law of gravitation—and it was six flights to the street—just to wave her little white hand at Edward as he turned into Broadway and hurried to the subway station; she would peer around the corner of the hateful fire escape, and bob her curly head, holding tightly to the frame of the window. And just before her husband disappeared around the corner of the bakery, he always stopped and shook the morning *Sun* at Millicent, and, of course, that ended matters until Edward returned from the office in the evening.

Then Millicent would come in out of the window, and fuss about the breakfast dishes, and chatter to herself, or, perhaps, hum or whistle blithely; and she would perhaps look carefully at the toe of her diminutive slipper to be sure it hadn't become scuffed, or hold her foot up and examine her stocking in a stern hunt for running threads; and then she would patter about tirelessly until four o'clock in the afternoon, when she would depart from the building in dignity to purchase five French chops, or a porterhouse steak, or whatever else she and Edward had decided upon during breakfast.

Now and then, when serious thoughts came too fast for her, she would stand for long minutes before the tall French mirror in her bedroom and wonder how it ever happened in this world or any

other that any human being could be so superlatively, ridiculously, senselessly happy. Sometimes she wondered whether she wasn't cheating the other people in the world by taking to herself so much of the visible supply of joyous contentment, and she would lean her snow-apple chin in her palm and stare at herself with a portentous frown, and marvel at the circumstances that brought Edward and her together, and finally made them man and wife.

There wasn't any doubt about one thing, and Millicent would bet you anything you liked that Edward Holly was the finest and best husband any girl ever had.

That's the way it went for two years. Edward worked eagerly and hopefully downtown in the big linen store, and his salary had jumped every six months or so. Together, they had wandered around town buying little things for the apartment, chucking pennies and dimes into the foolish little bank, planning vacations months ahead of time, getting themselves insured for each other. Not one single, solitary thing ever happened to cast a shadow upon their young lives, and yet, toward the middle of the third year, Millicent Holly began to do the breakfast dishes without singing.

When Edward was about the house she was as gay and happy, ostensibly, as ever, but the moment the front door had closed behind him the blue eyes of Millicent clouded, the housework was finished in silence, and for hours at a time the little wife sat in the big morris chair and thought things.

Once Edward surprised her. He came home from the office at two in the afternoon, and when he slipped into the parlor he found a moist and curled-up wife, with red eyes and a shiny nose.

"Why, what in the world's the matter?" Edward asked, stopping in the doorway and gazing at Millicent in amazement.

"It's—it's the toothache," Millicent said, and her confusion was that of a child who has been caught coming red-lipped from the pantry.

"You'll have to go to the dentist's tomorrow," Edward said sternly. "You never told me about it before."

"I never had it before," she answered weakly. "It's gone now."

Toothache? No, sir. Every tooth in Millicent's mouth was as sound and white as could be. It was an ache, but it came from Millicent's heart and not from her teeth, and any little married lady in the land who has a great deal of time to herself, and who becomes introspective and inquiring is very likely to acquire just such an ache.

How it ever began Millicent could not have explained. Probably a germ crept in on the dumb-waiter, and fastened itself upon the unsuspecting wife. At any rate, a thought found its way into Millicent's head, and there it stayed, growing larger 'ay by day, feeding upon unrealities and trivialities, waxing stouter and noisier until the once cheerful victim grew pensive, and then melancholy, and finally morose.

Robbed of its seven hundred branches, sub-branches, tails, intricacies, and divisions, the thought was this:

Edward Holly is not the devoted husband he seems because there is another woman.

How Millicent came to this conclusion upon the flimsy evidence at hand is something for the psychologists and instinct explainers to putter with. First it was an idle, flitting thought, and next it became a feeling. Somewhere, Millicent decided, there was a woman, and this woman had some claim upon Edward, her lawfully wedded husband.

Furthermore, Edward liked this wom-

an—perhaps he loved her a little. He couldn't love her very much because it was perfectly plain, even to Millicent, that he loved his wife a great deal, and no man is capable of loving two women simultaneously.

It never occurred to Millicent to ask Edward about this other woman. She had her pride to consider. She was too much in love with Edward to speak to him of such a ridiculous and unpleasant subject, and she had a conviction that Edward would be highly indignant about it, and that he would walk out of the apartment, and slam the door after him with vicious energy, and perhaps never come back again.

These were all things to consider thoughtfully, and day after day Millicent pondered over the situation and tried to find a solution.

The very first tangible proof came unexpectedly, and with such directness that Millicent was stunned. At dinner one evening the telephone bell rang. Edward arose promptly and answered it. The conversation was brief, but not a word of what Edward said escaped Millicent.

"Hello," Edward said. "Who's this?"

Words over the phone which Millicent could not hear.

"Yes, of course," Edward replied. "Not to-morrow, but perhaps the next day."

More mysterious words over the phone.

"I'll tell you what you do," Edward continued. "You telephone me at the office to-morrow or the day following, and we'll fix it up then. I'm a very busy man these days, and I have to watch every minute. Does that suit you? All right. Good-by."

Then Edward hung up the receiver peacefully and returned to his dinner, while Millicent tried desperately to look indifferent and to keep her unruly lips from quivering. Edward noticed the strange expression at once, but he said nothing for some moments. Finally he smiled.

"What is it, Millie?" he asked.

"Who was that?" she asked, trying to speak calmly.

"Why, don't you know who that was?" he said banteringly. "That's an old sweetheart of mine. I haven't heard from her in the longest time. It's surprising how one's sweethearts neglect one after one marries a charming little wife."

"Who was that?" Millicent repeated, with deadly calmness.

"That"—and then Edward saw that the matter was not for joking—"that was Timothy P. Sorrigan, the coal man. I've been dickering with him about a house he owns in East Orange."

"Are you sure?"

"Why, of course! Who else could it be?"

"It might be any one of a great number of people; but, of course, I believe you."

"Millicent, child, you will never have to bother your pretty head about people who telephone me or to whom I telephone. There will never be the slightest possibility of my deceiving you."

That ended the incident for the time being. Millicent did not speak of it again, but it was food for thought. It simply added a bit of fuel to the smoldering fire that was burning in her breast; and the next morning, after Edward had gone to the office, she looked carefully in the telephone book to be certain there was such a person as Timothy P. Sorrigan. She failed to find the name because she looked in the New York directory, and Mr. Sorrigan had for years resided in Jersey City.

"I knew he wasn't telling me the truth," she whispered. "He gave me the very first name that came into his mind."

After that came the dreadful morning. Millicent leaned from her accustomed window, and waved her accustomed adieu, and precisely when she was backing in out of danger she noticed a woman cross the street behind Edward. Millicent did not know the woman. She saw her quicken her pace, and wave her hand to some one directly ahead of her, and that some one, of course, was Edward Holly who had just turned the corner. It could be no one

else, for at that moment the block was practically deserted.

In a desperate panic, Millicent flew to her bedroom and threw herself into a cloak. Then she dashed out into the hallway, and irritated the elevator boy by ringing the bell steadily until he ascended and frowned at her.

Once on the street, she hurried after the pair. She had no particular idea of what she was going to do when she found them, but she wanted to be certain. They had disappeared into the subway kiosk, and even when Millicent, bareheaded and breathless, descended with the morning crowds, she found the station platform empty. A train was just pulling out. Her chase had brought her nothing.

"I know that woman waved her hand at Edward," she repeated over and over as she walked back home. "I could never believe him capable of deceit, but I surely can't doubt my own eyes. And the brazenness of it—right under my nose. The very next thing, she'll be waiting for him in front of the house. What in the world is New York City coming to when strange women meet your husband before he has time to get around the corner!"

Millicent spent the greater part of the day weeping. She did not weep boisterously or sobbingly, but the tears trickled between her eyelids and refused to stop trickling, no matter how hard she winked and stamped her foot.

At dinner she was unnaturally silent, and, after she had explained to Edward that she felt depressed and unhappy, she fixed up the table, brought him his slippers, and hopped into bed without bidding him good night.

Edward sat and stared over the top of the evening paper, and wondered what it is that sometimes comes over wives, and why they won't be frank enough to tell a husband what it is.

Dozens of things happened after that. Every one of them tended to convince the miserable Millicent that some terrible misfortune was hovering over their happy home. Perhaps Edward would come home some night soon and tell her that he was tired of married life, and

that he had arranged to send her home to Syracuse; that he was going to conduct his affairs differently, and that she had ceased to be a help to him. Then he would go to the other woman.

The thought was agonizing, but she was certain that if she asserted herself and voiced her suspicions, it would only precipitate matters. She would wait to the very last—but waiting was terribly hard.

Once during the forenoon the telephone rang, and she answered it happily, hoping Edward might have called up. A girlish voice inquired whether it was Mr. Holly's apartment, and, with a quiver in her voice, Millicent replied in the affirmative.

"Is Mr. Holly in?" continued the voice. It was an extremely pleasant voice.

"No, he is not," Millicent said. "Who is this, please?"

Before the other could reply there was a wretched jangling on the wire, and thereafter no voice answered, although Millicent stood before the receiver for ten minutes.

"She rang off on purpose," Millicent murmured indignantly. "It's that woman, and when she found out Edward wasn't here she hung up the receiver. She's an unscrupulous villain, and I hope something terrible happens to her."

The evening newspapers were generally unread in the Holly home, but now things were changed. Evening newspapers are not happy, optimistic institutions. Every night they come hammering from the presses, filled to the last column with crime and tribulations, unhappiness, deceit, general cussedness, and calamitous prophecies.

Had Edward known how Millicent formed the habit of wading laboriously through these afternoon papers he would have put a sudden and emphatic stop to it, and he would have been particularly disturbed if he could have watched her fascinated countenance as she read. There, in the plainest and largest of type, she learned that seventeen couples get married in New York every hour or two, and that statistics prove the results to be anything but

happy. Of the seventeen couples, fifteen subsequently apply for divorce. Babies are born, and before they have a chance to get acquainted with the family circle the said circle bursts with a sickening crash, and a divorce judge signs his name to the petition.

Dutiful and long-suffering wives from Spuyten Duyvil to the Battery Park learn suddenly that their husbands have been supporting other wives in the very next block for unnumbered years, and the industrious reporters call around and interview everybody concerned, securing photographs of the wives, and publishing them heartlessly under headings: Wife No. 1 and Wife No. 2. A deceived wife jumps into the Hudson when she finds out that her husband has another home in Albany, and the papers make fun of her, and say she tried to climb out again because the water was too cold.

Reading in the dusk, until long past the time to hurry out after the tomatoes and lettuce, Millicent discovered with despair that in America two hundred couples out of every three hundred finally have to be divorced, while in England only one couple in two hundred and ninety seeks legal separation in the courts.

"I wish Edward and I lived in England," she groaned miserably.

Then she wiped her eyes, ceased reading, and meekly obeyed the command of the hidden autocrat who operates dumb-waiters.

A period of comparative quiet ensued. For almost a week nothing had happened to add to the burden of her woe, and her suspicions were quiet, although by no means dead. She became enthusiastic over a long-desired Daghestan rug for the dining room, and her ardor was even warmer than it would have been ordinarily, owing to the keen interest Edward felt in the new household addition.

They had searched the shops earnestly, and had finally selected a beauty. It was a small rug, but it spoke of the mysterious Orient, and the man guaranteed it in the warmest of terms. Edward had promised the necessary fifty

dollars at the very first possible moment, and he chose breakfast time as the moment of surprise.

"Here's the fifty dollars," he said cheerfully. "To-day you go downtown and plank it down on the counter, and insist that they send up that rug before night. You want to examine it closely so that he won't send up some other one."

"Are you sure we can afford it now?" Millicent asked timidly.

"Positive. I've been saving up this fifty, a penny at a time, and if you don't spend it for the rug I'll take it down and hurl it into the first ocean I come to."

Edward kissed Millicent twice that morning, and Millicent kissed Edward three times, so that the existence of cordial relations is apparent to the dumbest.

At ten o'clock, Millicent, arrayed in a brown suit that would have caused an admiring commotion in the Garment Belt, started for the subway. She was happier than she had been in weeks. Joy and contentment radiated from her as she tripped into Broadway, and if she had only known the presence of the catastrophe that lurked before her in the delicatessen store she would have hurried past in fear and trembling.

She stopped and nibbled the forefinger of her glove. The morning cream had soured. New cream must be sent in for dinner and, besides that, the coffee was running low, and Edward hadn't had his canned pears in four nights.

Beside her stood a tall, dark woman. She was paying for her purchases as Millicent entered, and her black bag lay gaping in the hollow of her arm. Millicent could not avoid seeing its contents, and, after her first casual glance, her breath stopped suddenly, and her eyes almost popped out.

A check—a blue check—lay on top of a roll of bills in the dark woman's bag, and there, in the right-hand bottom corner, in the well-known fat, scrawly letters, was Edward's name. Millicent realized it almost before her eyes carried the message to her brain. She felt numb, and hot, and shivery all in the same second, and while she was

standing like an open-lipped statue, ignoring the repeated inquiries of the clerk, the tall, dark woman snapped her bag shut and turned away.

Millicent followed her mechanically to the door, and touched her on the arm.

"I beg your pardon," she said, in a small, thin voice. "I would like to speak to you a moment."

The stranger looked at her in mild surprise.

"Certainly," she said, and Millicent followed her outside.

They stopped at the curbing. Millicent's hands were tightly clenched, and she was doing her level best to keep her voice from trembling.

"We won't have a scene," she began hurriedly. "I haven't any intention of making a scene, and you need not be afraid of me. I am quite calm and collected, but what I must say is this: I know you. I have suspected Edward for a long time, and I have known about you. Fate has thrown you into my path. I have discovered you by accident, and I want you to listen to me, and to try to understand me. Edward and I are very happy. That is, we have been very happy until I discovered that there was such a person as you, I know nothing of Edward's past, and I desire to know nothing. I know nothing of you, except that you existed. I want to appeal to all that is best in you, and to ask you to go away. You can never be happy if you are wicked, and unless you promise me to go away and leave Edward forever, you will only wreck our lives and ruin our home. I am Edward's lawful wife, and I am very selfish about wanting him all to myself, but it is for his happiness as well as my own that I appeal to you. If you have any real feeling for him you will agree to go away, and never see him again. Will you promise me that you will do this?"

The tall, dark woman looked down into Millicent's eager face. Her own eyes lighted with a strange, slow smile.

"Why?" she said, after a pause. "Why should I promise?"

"Because it is the only right thing to do," Millicent continued. "I am sure

that I love Edward a great deal more than you do. You can break off everything by leaving and never coming back, and you will make me very happy. You need go no further. You need not even cash the check you have in your bag. Give me the check, and I will give you the fifty dollars in money, and that can be the end of it. I am sure that a woman of your apparent breeding cannot continue as Edward's—cannot continue to know Edward after what I have told you. It would be different if we were not so contented or if Edward was dissatisfied with his married life. But he is not. I assure you that he loves me. Will you give me the check he gave you, and take the fifty dollars?"

The tall woman laid her hand upon Millicent's shoulder, and looked steadily into her eyes.

"I will," she said.

The transaction occupied only an instant. The fifty dollars changed hands, and Edward's check nestled in Millicent's purse.

"Will you go away?" she continued.

The stranger nodded.

"And never come back again?"

"I promise you never to come back?"

"Will you forbid Edward to see you again? Will you hide where he cannot find you or write to you?"

"I promise everything. What you have said to me has been a revelation. I have discovered many things from your conversation that I never knew before, and I give you my word Edward will never find me."

"Then that is all," Millicent said, with a smile that was strained to the utmost to conceal the sob behind it.

The woman patted her shoulder, turned on her heel, and walked slowly away. Millicent watched her for a moment; then she went home quickly, threw herself upon the bed without removing her street things, and gave herself up in a flood of tears.

Hours later she emerged, disheveled and with swollen eyes. She dropped listlessly into the easy-chair, and fingered the bit of blue paper. The big, comfortable room seemed changed. The building across the street had become

strange and unreal. Life had suddenly become a tragic thing.

"Hetty Brown," Millicent muttered again and again.

She became aware of a violent hatred for the two words, written in Edward's hurried script upon the check. Accidentally—through the intervention of fate itself—she had come upon this woman. She had found her with a check from Edward, bearing a date not twenty-four hours old. It was hideous even to think of it—of Edward's deception. What were his relations with this woman? How long had he known her? Why had she not discovered it before? As she pondered she became cool, and as she became cooler she became indignant.

An inspiration hummed through her brain, and in another moment she was standing before Edward's big, black, imposing desk. For more than two years Millicent had been dusting this great desk with loving hands, polishing the brass knobs, digging dirt out of corners, piling up papers in neat mounds, arranging pads, blotters, pens, inkwells, and calendars so that Edward might write in comfort.

The drawers were never locked. Time and again Millicent had made them orderly when their disarray became too offensive, but it had never occurred to her to examine their contents. These bulky envelopes with their protruding papers were Edward's, and beyond taking a proper pride in that important fact, Millicent was uninterested.

To-day things had changed. The trusting wife was no longer an innocent and unsuspecting helpmate. Her fondest affections had received a shattering blow, and her faith had crumpled. Her whole mind was filled with one big desire. Millicent was curious to examine Edward's check book, and she attacked the desk with determination.

It was no difficult matter to find the big book, with its stiff, narrow back. Half the checks had been used, but the stubs remained, and Millicent sat down on the floor with her feet crossed under her. She found what she was seeking. The stubs told her a story of marital

duplicity. It was like putting together the very last pieces in a picture puzzle.

Millicent found the name of Hetty Brown again and again. On each stub was written in Edward's hand:

"Hetty Brown. Rent, fifty dollars."

Millicent totaled the amount as indicated by the stubs, and found that Edward had paid Hetty Brown five hundred dollars. Heaven only knew how much more he had given the woman with other check books or in plain cash!

The shamelessness of it stunned Millicent. Edward, her devoted husband, not only knew this other woman, but he paid her rent. Presumably, he paid for her gowns and took care of her grocery bills. Millicent remembered the roll of bills in the black bag. Without the shadow of a doubt, those bills came from her Edward—her Edward, whom she had regarded as the best and finest husband a girl ever had.

Through tear-dimmed eyes, she read on, searching for new and more agonizing information, but the stubs were silent. She found her own name scores of times, and her wrath rose.

"Millicent. Tan shoes, four dollars."

"Millicent. Gloves, two dollars."

"Millicent. Stockings, three dollars."

"That's it," she cried angrily. "Poor Millicent gets the ones and twos, and his Hetty Brown gets the fifties. All is over. I am not going to waste my life on a man like this. I could never have believed it unless I saw it for myself, but now that I am convinced I know exactly what I shall do."

She arose, gathered up the tumbled papers about her, and threw them into the orderly desk. She bathed her eyes in steaming water to remove traces of tears, and she donned the little blue gown that Edward called the prettiest gown in the world.

When he came in blithely at six, he found her standing with her back to the fireplace. The dinner table glistened in its fresh varnish. Edward stopped and gazed about the room. His smile faded slowly as he observed the bare table and the stiff figure before the fireplace.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

Millicent looked at him a moment before answering. Her face was stern and impassive, but her fingers were dreadfully cold.

In silence, she raised her right hand and pointed to the table. In the centre Edward saw the blue check.

"I know everything," Millicent said, in a voice that was unfamiliar and unsteady.

"I'm glad you know everything," Edward said, his wonderment increasing. "Perhaps you will tell me a little, and relieve my colossal ignorance. Where, for instance, is the dinner? And where, in the name of goodness, did you get that check?"

He moved over to the table, and picked up the Hetty Brown slip.

"I lost this check this morning," he said, with a puzzled stare.

"You did not lose it," Millicent burst out, losing her pose, her composure, and her severity at the same instant. "You gave it to Hetty Brown. The right woman got it, but she didn't keep it. You have deceived me, Edward Holly, but you can deceive me no longer. I am not the innocent woman you thought I was." Edward began to grim at this strange remark. "I mean, I am not trusting," Millicent hurried on. "I got that check from Hetty Brown. Furthermore, I looked in your check book, and found that you have been paying her rent for ten months. She gave me that check this morning in front of the delicatessen store. I cashed it for her because I didn't want the shameful matter to go any farther. I gave her the fifty dollars you left me this morning. She promised me to go away."

"To go away?" Edward said.

"Yes, and never to see you again," Millicent nodded tragically.

"Good Lord!" Edward exclaimed, dropping his hat upon the floor.

Into the midst of this dramatic situation came the tinkle of the front bell. Edward and Millicent heard the maid open the door, and a male voice sounded in the hallway, followed an instant later by the appearance of Hopkins.

Hopkins was the superintendent of

the building. His characteristic was hurry. Without prologue, he bounced into the dining room, and a flow of conversation accompanied him.

"It's all right about the paper, Mr. Holly," he volleyed. "We'll have the hangers here in the morning, and the bathroom will be done over in a day or two. You can have the weather strips without paying a penny, and I finally got her to consent to put up new molding in the hall. And, believe me, Mr. Holly, you've got me to thank for all this. Hetty Brown doesn't spend money on her buildings unless you take an axe to her. Only the other day one of her tenants on the floor below——"

"That's all right, Hopkins," Edward said. "Thanks very much. Come along, I want to show you something out here in the hall."

During Hopkins' speech, Millicent's rigid figure had undergone a change.

Her eyes had wandered from Hopkins to Edward, and her lips had parted in wild astonishment. She was standing beside the table, and her fingers rested upon the fifty-dollar check. She picked it up, and stared at the name.

Edward had preceded Mr. Hopkins a step or two, and as the latter bowed to Millicent she held out the check.

"You'd better take this with you," she said, in a faint voice. "It's this month's rent."

When Edward came in from the hall he found a funny little figure on the davenport, with its face buried in its hands. He bent over, and took Millicent in his arms.

"What a funny little wife you are," said Edward.

"I guess we'll have to do without the Daghestan rug," Millicent said tearfully. "Wasn't I a fool? I wonder who that woman was?"



MYSTERY

GREEN leaf—gold leaf—gray—
Each has its day,
And then away!
Aye, who can say,
Whither, whither away?

Green age—gold age—gray—
Each has its day,
And then away!
Aye, who can say,
Whither, whither away?

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



The FLAG PARAMOUNT

By O. HENRY.

A DOZEN quarts of champagne, in conjunction with an informal sitting of the president and his cabinet, led to the establishment of the navy and the appointment of Felipe Carrera as its admiral. The wine had been sent by the Mogul Banana Company of New Orleans as a token of amicable relations—and certain consummated deals—between that company and the republic.

Next to the champagne, the credit of the appointment belonged to Don Sabas Placido, the newly appointed minister of war.

The session had been signally tedious; the business and the wine prodigiously dry. A sudden, prankish humor of Don Sabas, impelling him to the deed, spiced the grave matters of state with a whiff of agreeable playfulness.

In the order of business had come a bulletin from the department of Orilla del Mar, reporting the seizure by the customhouse officers, at the coast town of Solitas, of the sloop *Estrella de Noche*, and her cargo of dry goods, patent medicines, granulated sugar, and three-star brandy. Also six Martini rifles and ten thousand Havana cigars. Caught in the act of smuggling, the sloop and cargo were now, according to law, the property of the republic.

The collector of customs, in making his statement, departed from conventional forms so far as to suggest that the confiscated vessel be converted to the use of the government. The prize was the first capture to the credit of the department for ten years. It often happened that government officials required

transportation from point to point along the coast, and means were usually lacking. Furthermore, the sloop could act as a coast guard to discourage the pernicious art of smuggling. The collector would also venture to name one to whom the charge of the boat could be safely intrusted—a young man, Felipe Carrera, not, be it understood, one of extreme wisdom, but loyal, and the best sailor along the coast.

It was upon this hint that the minister of war executed his little piece of drollery that so enlivened the tedium of executive session.

In the constitution of this small, maritime banana republic was a forgotten section providing for the maintenance of a navy. The champagne was bubbling trickily in the veins of the mercurial statesmen. A formidable document was prepared, incrusted with chromatic seals and jaunty with fluttering ribbons, bearing the florid signatures of state, and conferring upon El Señor Don Felipe Carrera the title of admiral of the marine fleet and force of the republic. Thus, within the space of a few minutes and the dominion of a dozen extra dry, the country rose to a place among naval powers, and Felipe Carrera became entitled to a salute of twenty-one guns whenever he should enter port.

The Southern races are lacking in that particular humor that finds entertainment in natural misfortunes. Owing to this defect, they are not moved to laughter at the deformed, the feeble-minded, or the insane. Felipe Carrera was but half-witted. Therefore, the peo-

ple of Solitas called him "*el pobrecito loco*," saying that God had sent but half of him to earth, retaining the other.

A somber youth, glowering and speaking only at the rarest times, Felipe was but negatively *loco*. He generally refused to answer all questions when on shore. He seemed to know that he was badly handicapped on land, where so many kinds of understanding are needed, but on the water few sailors whom God had entirely and carefully completed could handle a sailboat as well. He could sail a sloop five points nearer to the wind's eye than the best of them. He owned no boat, but worked among the crews of the schooners and sloops that skimmed the coast, trading, and freighting fruit out to the steamers where there was no harbor. It was through his famous boldness and skill as a sailor, as well as the pity felt for his mental imperfections, that he was remembered by the collector as a suitable custodian of the captured sloop.

When the outcome of Señor Placido's little pleasantries arrived in the form of the imposing commission, the collector wondered, and then smiled. He sent for Felipe, placed the document in his hands, explaining carefully to him the high honor that the government had granted him. Without a word, the newly created admiral took his commission, and departed.

The next morning he came again to the collector, and as he passed through the village streets many were the compassionate exclamations of "*pobrecito muchacho*," but never a laugh or a smile.

Somewhere, Felipe had raked together a pitiful semblance of a military uniform—a pair of red trousers, a dingy blue jacket embroidered with yellow braid, and an old fatigue cap abandoned by one of the British soldiers in Belize. In the latter he had fastened the gaudy feathers of a parrot's tail. Buckled around his waist was an ancient ship's cutlass contributed by Pedro Lafitte, the barber, who proudly asserted its inheritance from his ancestor, the illustrious buccaneer.

At the admiral's heels tagged his newly shipped crew—three grinning, glossy

black Caribs, bare to the waist; the sand in the street spurting in a shower from the spring of their naked feet.

With becoming dignity, Felipe demanded his vessel of the collector. And now a fresh honor awaited him. The collector's wife, a thin, little, yellow woman who read novels in a hammock all day, had found, in an old book, an engraving of a flag purporting to be the naval flag of the republic. Perhaps it had been so designed by the founders of the nation; but, as no navy had ever been established, oblivion had claimed its flag. With her own tawny hands she had made a flag after this pattern—a red cross upon a blue and white ground. Having a little of the romance that abounded in her novels, she presented it to Felipe with the words:

"Brave sailor, this flag is of your country. It you will defend with the life. Go with God."

For the next month or two the navy had its troubles. Even the admiral was perplexed to know what to do without orders, but none came. Neither did any salaries. The sloop was rechristened *El Nacional*, repainted, and swung idly at anchor. When Felipe's little store of money was exhausted, he went to the collector and raised the question of finances.

"Salaries!" exclaimed the collector, with his hands raised. "Qué salaries! Not one *centavo* have I received of my own for seven months. The pay of an admiral, do you ask? Quien sabe? Should it be less than three thousand *pesos*? Mira! You will see a revolution in this country very soon. A good sign of it is when they call for *pesos*, *pesos*; and pay none out."

Felipe left the collector with a look almost of content in his somber face. A revolution would mean fighting, and then the government would need his services. It was rather humiliating to be an admiral without anything to do, and have a hungry crew begging for *reales* to buy plantains and bread to eat.

When he returned to where the good-natured Caribs were hopefully waiting, they sprang up and saluted, as he had taught them.

"Come, *muchachos*," said the admiral. "The government is poor. It has no money at present. We will earn what we need to live upon. Soon"—his heavy eyes almost lighted up—"our help may be gladly sought for."

Thereafter *El Nacional* turned out, with the other coast craft, and freighted bananas and oranges to the fruit steamers who could not come nearer than a mile off shore, there being no harbor at Solitas. Surely a self-supporting navy deserves red letters in the budget of any nation!

There was a little telegraph office in Solitas whence a little telegraph line ran over the big mountains to the capital. After earning enough at freighting to keep his crew in provisions and pay for a week or two, Felipe would infest this office, looking like the chorus of an insolvent comic-opera troupe besieging the manager's den.

One day in early summer the revolution predicted by the collector flamed out suddenly. It had long been smoldering. At the head of the insurgents appeared that Hector and learned Theban of the Central American republics, Don Sabas Placido. A traveler, a soldier, a poet, a scientist, a statesman, and a connoisseur—the wonder was that he could content himself with the petty, remote life of his native country.

"It is a whim of Placido's," said a friend who knew him well, "to take up political intrigue. It is not otherwise than if he had come upon a new tempo in music; a new bacillus in the air; a new scent, a rhyme, or explosive. He will squeeze this revolution dry of sensations, and, a week afterward, forget it, skimming the seas of the world in his brigantine to add to his already world-famous collection of—*por Dios!*—everything—from postage stamps to *maquinas de vapor*."

But the aesthetic Placido seemed to be creating a lively row, for a mere dilettante. The admired of the people, they had risen almost in a body to seat him in the place of the inclement President Prados. There was sharp fighting in the capital, where, contrary to arrangements, the army had rallied to the de-

fense of the incumbent. There was, also, lively skirmishing in most of the coast towns. It was rumored that the revolution was aided by a powerful concern in the States—the Mogul Banana Company. Two of their steamers, the *Traveler* and the *Salvador*, were known to have conveyed insurgent troops from point to point along the coast.

At the first note of war the admiral of the naval fleet and force made all sail for Belize, where he traded a hastily collected cargo for cartridges for the five Martini rifles, the armament of *El Nacional*. Then back he hurried, to be prepared for his country's call.

As yet, there had been no actual uprising in Solitas. Military law ruled, and the ferment was bottled for the time. There was a report that everywhere the revolutionists were encountering defeat. In the capital the president's forces triumphed, and there was a rumor that the leaders of the revolt had been forced to flee, hotly pursued.

In the little telegraph office at Solitas there was always a gathering of officials and loyal citizens, awaiting news from the seat of government. One morning the telegraph key began clicking, and presently the operator called loudly: "One telegram for *El Almirante*, Don Señor Felipe Carrera!"

There was a shuffling sound, a great rattling of tin scabbard, and the admiral, prompt at his spot of waiting, leaped across the room to receive it.

The message was handed to him. Slowly spelling it out, he found it to be his first official order—thus running:

Proceed immediately with your vessel to mouth of Rio Ruiz; transport beef and provisions to barracks, at Alforan.

MARTINEZ, General.

Small glory, to be sure, in this, his country's first call. But it had called, and joy surged in the admiral's breast. He drew his cutlass belt to another buckle hole, roused his dozing crew, and in a quarter of an hour *El Nacional* was tacking swiftly down coast in a stiff landward breeze.

The Rio Ruiz is a small river, emptying into the sea ten miles below Solitas.

That portion of the coast is wild and solitary.

In two hours *El Nacional* entered the river's mouth. The banks were crowded with a disposition of formidable trees. The sumptuous undergrowth of the tropics overflowed the land, and drowned itself in the fallow waters. Silently the sloop entered there, and met a deeper silence. Brilliant with greens, and ochres, and floral scarlets, the umbrageous mouth of the Rio Ruiz furnished no sound or movement save of the seagoing water as it curled against the prow of the vessel. Small chance there seemed of wresting beef or provisions from that empty solitude.

The admiral decided to cast anchor, and, at the chain's rattle, the forest was stimulated to instant and resounding uproar. The mouth of the Rio Ruiz had only been taking a morning nap. Parrots and baboons screeched and barked in the trees; a whirring, and a hissing, and a booming marked the awakening of animal life; a dark-blue bulk was visible for an instant, as a startled tapir fought his way through the vines.

The navy, under orders, hung in the mouth of the little river for hours. The crew served the dinner of shark's fin soup, plantains, crab gumbo, and sour claret. The admiral, with a three-foot telescope, closely scanned the impervious foliage fifty yards away.

It was nearly sunset when a reverberating "hallo-o-o" came from the forest to their left. It was answered, and three men, mounted upon mules, crashed through the tropic tangle to within a dozen yards of the river's bank. There they dismounted; and one, unbuckling his belt, struck each mule a violent blow with his sword scabbard, so that they, with a fling of heels, dashed back again into the forest.

Those were strange-looking men to be convoying beef and provisions. One was a large and exceedingly active man, of striking presence. He was of the purest Spanish type, with curling dark hair, gray besprinkled, blue, sparkling eyes, and the pronounced air of a *caballero grande*. The other two were small, brown-faced men, wearing white mili-

tary uniforms, high riding boots, and swords. The clothes of all were drenched, bespattered, and rent by the thicket. Some stress of circumstance must have driven them, *diable à quatre*, through flood, mire, and jungle.

"O-hé! *Señor Almirante*," called the large man. "Send to us your boat."

The dory was lowered, and Felipe, with one of the Caribs, rowed toward the left bank.

The large man stood near the water's brink, waist-deep in the curling vines. As he gazed upon the scarecrow figure in the stern of the dory a sprightly interest beamed upon his mobile face. Months of wageless and thankless service had dimmed the admiral's splendor. His red trousers were patched and ragged. Most of the bright buttons and yellow braid were gone from his jacket. The visor of his cap was torn, and depended almost to his eyes. The admiral's feet were bare.

"Dear admiral," cried the large man, and his voice was like a blast from a horn, "I kiss your hands. I knew we could build upon your fidelity. You had our dispatch—from General Martinez. A little nearer with your boat, dear admiral. Upon these evils of shifting vines we stand with the smallest security."

Felipe regarded him with a stolid face.

"Provisions and beef for the barracks at Alforan," he quoted.

"No fault of the butchers, *Almirante mío*, that the beef awaits you not. But you are come in time to save the cattle. Get us aboard your vessel, señor, at once. You first, *caballeros*—*á prisa*. Come back for me. The boat is too small."

The dory conveyed the two officers to the sloop, and returned for the large man.

"Have you so gross a thing as food, good admiral?" he cried, when aboard. "And, perhaps, coffee? Beef and provisions! *Nombre de Dios!* A little longer, and we could have eaten one of those mules that you, Colonel Rafael, saluted so feelingly with your sword scabbard at parting. Let us have food;

and then we will sail—for the barracks at Alforan—no?"

The Caribs prepared a meal, to which the three passengers of *El Nacional* set themselves with famished delight. About sunset, as was its custom, the breeze veered and swept back from the mountains, cool and steady, bringing a taste of the stagnant lagoons and mango swamps that guttered the lowlands. The mainsail of the sloop was hoisted, and swelled to it, and at that moment they heard shouts and a waxing clamor from the bosky profundities of the woods.

"The butchers, my dear admiral," said the large man, smiling, "too late for the slaughter."

Further than his orders to his crew, the admiral was saying nothing. The topsail and jib were spread, and the sloop glided out of the estuary. The large man and his companions had bestowed themselves with what comfort they could about the bare deck. Belike, the thing big in their minds had been their departure from that critical shore; and now that the hazard was so far reduced, their thoughts were loosed to the consideration of further deliverance. But when they saw the sloop turn and fly up the coast again they relaxed, satisfied with the course the admiral had taken.

The large man sat at ease, his spirited blue eye engaged in the contemplation of the navy's commander. He was trying to estimate this somber and fantastic lad, whose impenetrable stolidity puzzled him. Himself a fugitive, his life sought, and chafing under the smart of defeat and failure, it was characteristic of him to transfer instantly his interest to the study of a thing new to him.

It was like him, too, to have conceived and risked all upon this last desperate and madcap scheme—this message to a poor, crazed *fanatico* cruising about with his grotesque uniform and his farcical title. But his companions had been at their wits' end; escape had seemed incredible; and now he was pleased at the success of the plan they had called crack-brained and precarious.

The brief, tropic twilight seemed to slide swiftly into the pearly splendor of a moonlit night. And now the lights of Solitas appeared, distributed against the darkening shore to their right. The admiral stood, silent, at the tiller; the Caribs, like black panthers, held the sheets, leaping noiselessly at his short commands. The three passengers were watching intently the sea before them, and when at length they came in sight of the bulk of a steamer lying a mile out from the town, with her lights radiating deep into the water, they held a sudden voluble and close-headed converse. The sloop was speeding as if to strike midway between ship and shore.

The large man suddenly separated from his companions, and approached the scarecrow at the helm.

"My dear admiral," he said, "the government has been exceedingly remiss. I feel all the shame for it that only its ignorance of your devoted service has prevented it from sustaining. An inexcusable oversight has been made. A vessel, a uniform, and a crew worthy of your fidelity shall be furnished you. But just now, dear admiral, there is business of moment afoot. The steamer lying there is the *Salvador*. I and my friends desire to be conveyed to her, where we are sent on the government's business. Do us the favor to shape your course accordingly."

Without replying, the admiral gave a sharp command, and put the tiller hard to port. *El Nacional* swerved, and headed, straight as an arrow's course, for the shore.

"Do me the favor," said the large man, a trifle restively, "to acknowledge, at least, that you catch the sound of my words." It was possible that the fellow might be lacking in senses as well as intellect.

The admiral emitted a croaking, harsh laugh, and spake.

"They will stand you," he said, "with your face to a wall, and shoot you dead. That is the way they kill traitors. I knew you when you stepped into my boat. I have seen your picture in a book. You are Sabas Placido, traitor to your country. With your face to a

wall. So, you will die. I am the admiral, and I will take you to them. With your face to a wall. Yes."

Don Sabas half turned and waved his hand, with a ringing laugh, toward his fellow fugitives.

"To you, *caballeros*, I have related the history of that *banquete* when we issued that, oh, so ridiculous commission. Of a truth, our jest has been turned against us. Behold the Frankenstein's monster we have created!"

Don Sabas glanced toward the shore. The lights of Solitas were drawing nearer. He could see the beach, the warehouse of the *Bodega Nacional*, the long, low *cuartel* occupied by the soldiers, and, behind that, gleaming in the moonlight, a stretch of high dove wall. He had seen men stood with their faces to that wall, and shot dead.

Again he addressed the extravagant figure at the helm.

"It is true," he said, "that I am fleeing the country. But, receive the assurance that I care very little for that. Courts and camps everywhere are open to Sabas Placido. *Vaya!* What is this molehill of a republic—this pig's head of a country—to a man like me? I am a *paisano* of everywhere. In *Roma*, *Londres*, *Viena*, *Nuevo York*, *Madrid*, you will hear them say: 'Welcome back, Don Sabas.' Come! *Toto*—baboon of a boy—admiral—whatever you call yourself—turn your boat! Put us on board the *Salvador*, and here is your pay—five hundred *pesos* in money of the *Estados Unidos*—more than your lying government will pay you in twenty years."

Don Sabas pressed a plump purse against the boy's hand. The admiral gave no heed to the words or the movement. Braced against the helm, he was holding the sloop dead on her shoreward course. His dull face was lit almost to intelligence by some internal conceit, that seemed to afford him joy, and found utterance in another parrot-like cackle.

"That is why they do it," he said, "so you will not see the guns. They fire—*boum!*—and you fall dead. With your face to the wall. Yes."

The admiral called a sudden order to his crew. The lithe, silent Caribs made fast the sheets they held and slipped down the hatchway into the hold of the sloop. When the last one had disappeared, Don Sabas, like a big, brown leopard, leaped, closed, and fastened the hatch, and stood, smiling.

"No rifles, if you please, dear admiral. It was a whimsy of mine once to compile a dictionary of the Carib *lengua*. So I understood your order. Perhaps you will now—"

He cut short his words, for he heard a sharp "swish" of iron scraping along tin. The admiral had drawn his cutlass, and was darting upon him. The blade descended, and it was only by a show of surprising agility that the large man escaped, with only a bruised shoulder, the glancing weapon. He was drawing his pistol as he sprang, and, the next instant, he shot the admiral down.

Don Sabas stooped over him, and rose again.

"*En el corazon*," he said briefly. "Señores, the navy is abolished."

Colonel Rafael sprang to the helm; the other officer hastened to loose the mainsail sheets. The boom swung round; *El Nacional* described a fluent curve, and began to tack industriously for the *Salvador*.

"Strike that flag, señor," called Colonel Rafael. "Our friends on the steamer will wonder why we are sailing under it."

"Well said," cried Don Sabas. Advancing to the mast, he lowered the flag to the deck, where lay its too loyal supporter. Thus ended the minister of war's little piece of after-dinner drollery, and by the same hand that began it.

Suddenly Don Sabas gave a great cry of joy, and ran down the slanting deck to the side of Colonel Rafael. Across his arm he carried the flag of the extinguished navy.

"*Mire! Mire, señor!* Ah, *Dios!* Already can I hear that great bear of an *Oestreicher* shout '*Du hast mein herz gebrochen!*' *Mire!* Of my friend, Herr Grunitz, of *Viena*, you have heard me

relate. That man has traveled to Ceylon for an orchid—to Patagonia for a headdress—to Benares for a slipper—to Mozambique for a spearhead to add to his famous collections. Thou knowest, also, *amigo* Rafael, that I have been a gatherer of curios. My collection of battle flags of the world's navies was the most complete in existence until last year. Then Herr Grunitz secured two, oh, so rare specimens. One of a Barbary state, and one of the Makaroroos, a tribe on the west coast of Africa. I have not those, but they can be procured. But this flag, señor—do you know what it is? Name of God! Do you know? See that red cross upon the blue and white ground! You never saw it before? *Seguramente, no.* It is the marine flag of your country. *Mire!* This rotten-tub we stand upon is its navy—that dead cockatoo lying there was its commander—that stroke of cutlass and single pistol shot a sea battle. All a piece of absurd foolery, I grant you—but authentic. There has never been another flag like this, and there never will be another. No. It is unique in the whole world. Yes. Think of what that means to a collector of flags! Do you know, *Coronel mio*, how many golden crowns Herr Grunitz would give for this flag? Ten thousand, likely. Well, a hundred thousand would not buy it. Beautiful flag! Only flag! Little devil of a most heaven-born flag! *O-hé!* Old grumbler beyond the ocean! Wait till Don Sabas comes again to the Königin Strasse. He will let you kneel and touch the folds of it with one finger. *O-hé!* Old spectacled ransacker of the world!"

Forgotten was the impotent revolution, the danger, the loss, the gall of defeat. Possessed solely by the inordinate and unparalleled passion of the collector, he strode up and down the little deck, clasping to his breast with one hand the paragon of a flag. He snapped his fingers triumphantly toward the east. He shouted the paean to his prize in trumpet tones, as if he would make old Grunitz hear.

They were waiting, on the *Salvador*, to welcome them. The sloop came close

alongside the steamer where her sides were sliced almost to the lower deck for the loading of fruit. The sailors of the *Salvador* grappled and held her there.

Captain McLeod leaned over the side.

"Well, señor, the jig is up, I'm told."

"The jig is up?" Don Sabas looked perplexed for a moment. "That revolution—*ah—si*." With a shrug of his shoulder he dismissed the matter.

The captain learned of the escape and the imprisoned crew.

"Caribs?" he said. "No harm in them." He slipped down into the sloop, and kicked loose the hasp of the hatch. The black fellows came tumbling up, sweating but grinning.

"Hey, black boys!" said the captain, in a dialect of his own. "You sabe, catchy boat and vamose back same place quick."

They saw him point to themselves, the sloop, and Solitas.

"Yas, yas!" they cried, with broader grins and many nods.

The four—Don Sabas, the two officers, and the captain—moved to quit the sloop. Don Sabas lagged a little behind, looking at the still form of the late admiral, sprawled in his paltry trappings.

"*Pobrecito loco,*" he said softly.

He was a brilliant cosmopolite and a *cognoscente* of high rank; but, after all, he was of the same race, and blood, and instinct of this people. Even as the simple *gente* of Solitas had said it, so said Don Sabas. Without a smile, he looked, and said: "The poor little crazed one!"

Stooping, he raised the limp shoulders, drew the priceless and induplicable flag under them and over the breast, pinning it there with the diamond star of the order of San Carlos that he took from the collar of his own coat.

He followed after the others, and stood with them upon the deck of the *Salvador*. The sailors that steadied *El Nacional* shoved her off. The jabbering Caribs hauled away at the rigging; the sloop headed for the shore; and Herr Grunitz's collection of naval flags was still the finest in the world.

HER FRIEND IN LAW

BY

J.W. MARSHALL



NT'S one mornin' when us fellers are eatin' breakfast at the Gateses', account the cook don't get back from Ogden on time. Sidney he comes a-prowlin' out of his room, when we're most through, and, after watchin' his ma out the tails of his eyes a minute, furtive, he goes a-fidgetin' toward the door, nervous like, allowin' he don't want any breakfast, noways, but'll hurry on out and get to playin' on time.

"Just a minute, son," says Mrs. Gates, a-lookin' at him suspicious. And then she slips into Sidney's room, comes back in a minute, grim like, and whispers somethin' to Sidney's pa. "Come, son," says she, quiet, a-holdin' out her hand thataway.

And then Sidney, who's been standin' there breathin' pretty hard, he looks at us fellers sheepish, sidles up to his ma, reluctant, and in about a minute there's the most frantic explainin' you ever listens to a-comin' from that room of his.

And Jim Slater he nudges me, and I nudges Lem Rogers, and then Jim he looks at Jimmie—who's Sidney's pa—sideways, and gives a little cough thataway. But Jimmie only helps himself to an extra slice of bread, ostentatious, and ain't lettin' on anything. So directly us fellers empties our coffee cups noisy as we dasts, scuffs our chairs back, and stands there a minute lookin' at Jimmie, pointed. But that doggoned Jimmie keeps a-spreadin' that piece of bread like gettin' it even all over is worth an hour's attention, easy.

"Butter's queer stuff thataway, ain't it?" says he, after a minute, exasperatin'. And with that Jim just gives a snort, and we all goes clompin' out like we're forty horses.

Of course, we ain't so doggoned crazy to know why Sidney's bein' licked, you understand; we just wants to know what it's about, that's all. So when Sidney comes a-stragglin' on over where we be, a little later on, we takes the opportunity to ease away on them colts a while, and roll a cigarette all round.

"Mighty fine mornin'!" Jim says to him, offhand like.

But Sidney don't say anything. He picks up a stone and heaves it at the corral, and his face is black as a black cat.

"You just wait, and I'll show 'em!" he chokes out, bitter, after a minute. "Just wait till I grows up, that's all, and I'll lick the both of 'em with one hand tied behind me!" And he sure looks pretty bad thataway.

"Pshaw!" says Jim, sympathetic. "Lickin's don't last long. I been licked myself when I'm a kid. I wouldn't let 'em make me feel bad," he says, coaxin'.

"You would if you was me!" busts out Sidney. "I can't help it!"

"Sure you can," says Jim, soothin'. "I just bet you can do anything if you tries hard enough."

"I can't!" wails Sidney. "That's just what ma says all the time; but I can't help it. 'Tain't my fault!" he snivels, a-rubbin' his sleeve across his face.

Well, at that, Jim gives a little start, suspicious, and looks round at us fellers a minute.

"Can't help what, son?" he asks him kindly.

"Nothin'!" he says, uneasy like. "I just can't help it, that's all; not if I'm licked to death for it!"

"Oh, I see!" says Jim, after a minute, shakin' his head at us fellers warnin'. "So that's it, eh!" And then he sits there, a-studyin', while Sidney keeps a-throwin' them stones, nervous, like he can't stop a minute. Then, after Sidney's heaved about a dozen rocks and ain't hit that post once, Jim quits studyin' and brings his hand down on his knees kerwhack.

"Great goodness alive!" he says, a-lookin' at Sidney like he's the luckiest tacker he ever hears of. "I sure wishes I was you for a few days! Don't I, though?" he says, eager. "If 'twasn't for more'n a week I'd be satisfied. But I can't, I reckon," he says, sad like. "When a feller gets grown up like me he's never goin' to have the high old times a-foolin' his folks like when he's a kid. I'd give a million dollars to be a kid again, and a-standin' in your shoes right this minute!" he says to Sidney, emphatic. "Yes, sir!" says he. "I'd make it *two* million if I was only you!"

And the funny part of it is, Jim ain't got even one million dollars, noway, let alone two, no more'n I have. But Sidney he pricks up his ears mighty quick, like Jim's got it right there in his hand, ready to hand over.

"Why?" he asks Jim, big-eyed.

"Why!" says Jim. "Why, doggone it all, so I could just fool your ma and pa all to pieces! That's why!"

And, with that, Sidney's eyes bugs out bigger yet, and he draws in his breath hurried, and he drops that last stone, and he goes tiptoein' up to Jim like Jim's about to tell him how he kills everybody in the world without any one knowin' who done it.

"How?" he whispers.

"How!" says Jim. "Why, the easiest way in the world. You just sit here a minute and you'll see."

And, with that, he goes on over to the

bunk house, and we hears him rummagin' round in that old box of his, and directly he comes on out with somethin' in his hand, and what you reckon it is? It's one of these here buckeyes you gets for your sling shot back home when you're a kid!

"There!" says Jim, a-holdin' out the buckeye toward Sidney, convincin'. "That's how!"

And he settles back, contented, like nobody in the world could do any more'n that, even for a sick friend. But Sidney draws back, disappointed.

"What is it, anyway?" he asks Jim, a-turnin' it over in his hand.

"That," says Jim, slow, like when he finishes tellin' it you're goin' to be so tickled you're most crazy, "that is a buckeye! None of your imitations for me; it's a sure-enough, hand-picked, pocket-polished buckeye, worth every cent you can get for 'em. Five cents in cash, and a half interest in a wild duck's nest I knows of at the time, is what I paid Henry Peters for that there buckeye. And then I only gets it account I'm a warm personal friend of Henry's, and, besides that, Henry don't know where that nest is. Hand 'er over," he says to Sidney, anxious, a-holdin' out his hand thataway. "I wouldn't lose it, not for somethin' pretty."

But Sidney ain't givin' back anything. "What's it good for?" he says, lettin' on he don't hear Jim account he's so keen a-lookin' it over.

"Lem," says Jim, turnin' to Lem Rogers abrupt, "what's a buckeye good for?"

"Rheumatism," says Lem, prompt.

"Right," says Jim. "Everybody in the world knows a buckeye keeps you from gettin' rheumatism. And what's rheumatism? It's pain, ain't it? You bet it is; the worst kind of pain. And that's what buckeyes are good for—for pain. Henry Peters was a great boy, he was. 'Fellers,' says Henry, all of a sudden one day, to us kids, out back of Henry's barn, 'if this here buckeye keeps you from feelin' rheumatism pains, why won't it keep a feller from feelin' lickin' pains?' And there you

are, in a nutshell. Why won't it? It's one of the greatest questions in the world! Henry's asked that day, account nobody in the world has ever answered it. And nobody ever will. Ask one of these here college professors—who knows all the answers there are—and he can't tell you to save his soul. Not even the President of these here United States can.

"But you can bet your life on one thing," goes on Jim, emphatic, "after Henry says that, I don't lose any time dickerin' for one of his buckeyes—Henry havin' two at the time—now, you mark me. And it's been worth all the money I ever paid for it, a dozen times over. Heigh-ho!" says Jim. "I sure wishes I was a kid again, havin' fun a-foolin' my folks with that there old buckeye."

And old Jim beats his hand on his leg again, laughin' hearty at what he would do.

And Sidney's a-standin' there with his eyes big as a horse's, and he's squeezin' that buckeye up in his hand like nobody ever gets it away from him again less'n it's over his dead body.

"About the best thing I ever hears concernin' one of them buckeyes is about a boy by the name of Johnnie Woods," goes on Jim, reminiscent, to Lem and me, when Sidney don't say anything. "This Johnnie boy is about Sidney's age at the time," says Jim, "and has been licked a lot of mornin's, recent, like Sidney was this mornin'. Well, Johnnie's ma she licks him most every mornin' for a long time, and don't get any results, and finally she gets as tired of lickin' Johnnie as Johnnie gets of bein' licked, and so, very naturally, she walks Johnnie over to the jail one of them mornin's and gets him arrested.

"What's this boy been doin' to get licked for?" says the judge, gruff, when it's time for Johnnie to be tried.

"And with that, a policeman steps up and whispers in the judge's ear.

"'Oh-ho!' says the judge. 'So that's it, eh! Are you guilty or not guilty?' he says to Johnnie, judicial.

"'I can't help it!' snivels Johnnie.

"Then it's high time you did!" sneers

the judge. 'Five years in jail on bread and water,' says he, prompt. But at that, the policeman steps up, hasty, and whispers in his ear again.

"Then why couldn't you of said he was only five years old in the first place?" says the judge, gruff, again. And, with that, he rummages round in his pocket, and pulls out a buckeye just like this one. 'Stand up, Johnnie Woods,' he says, ominous. 'Is there anything you wishes to say before I hands you this here buckeye?' he asks him.

"I'm much obliged," says Johnnie, nervous.

"Don't mention it," says the judge, a-handin' it over. 'I reckon you'd do the same by me if you had the chance.' And, with that, he leans forward, confidential, and he puts his hand up to one side of his mouth thataway; and I bet you can't guess what that judge whispers to Johnnie!" says Jim to Lem Rogers.

"Doggid if I knows!" says Lem, guarded.

"And I compliments you highly on makin' such a fine guess," says Jim. "Nobody knows; they're only suspicious. All any one sure-enough knows is that when it's over the judge, he wipes his eyes, hasty, and the women folks they all crowd round Johnnie and hugs him, givin' him flowers and things, and the men they're all shakin' hands with each other, most cordial. And there ain't a dry eye in the room as Johnnie goes marchin' out, all safe again, and free, his face just a-shinin', and the judge's buckeye clutched tight in his little brown hand."

"But what does Johnnie do with the buckeye?" asks Sidney, impatient, when Jim's through.

"Well," says Jim, "all any one knows is this: Johnnie puts that buckeye in his pocket, and he keeps it there, where it's handy to touch every once in a while. Whenever he thinks of it durin' the day, he sticks his hand in his pocket, and there he finds that buckeye. And at night—and here's the point to the whole thing—whenever he sort of wakes up thataway, he hops out of bed,

prompt, goes over to where his pants are a-hangin' on that chair, sticks his hand in that pocket, and touches that buckeye. And there you are!

"There's no hurry about it after you're once up, you understand," goes on Jim. "You loaf round a little before you touches the buckeye, if you likes. Or, if you so fancies, you touches it quick, and then loaf round a little afterward, before you climbs back into bed again. Johnnie Woods always made it a point to loaf round a little *after* he touches the buckeye, but it works either way."

"And then when you get licked in the mornin' you don't feel it?" asks Sidney, eager.

"Why, that's the real point to the whole thing," says Jim. "You don't feel any pain when you gets licked, account you don't get licked! That's how you fools your ma and pa up so. Don't you savvy?"

And Sidney looks at Jim, and Jim looks back at Sidney, hard, and in a minute Sidney draws in his breath sharp, and begins diggin' his toe in the dirt. "Yes, sir," says he, nervous, "I savvies."

"Sure you do," says Jim. "I reckon I'll have to lick Johnnie again in the mornin'; Mrs. Woods would say to old Woods, just when they're a-droppin' off to sleep at night. 'I reckon so,' old Woods would drone out, drowsy. And then they'd drop off to sleep, never dreamin' 't maybe Johnnie was gettin' up right then to touch that buckeye of his. And then Johnnie he'd loaf round a while after he'd touched it, a-smilin' away to himself, happy like, knowin' how he fools 'em both about that lickin' in the mornin'.

"And in the mornin' Mrs. Woods she'd go a-stalkin' into that room of Johnnie's, like she's just a-goin' to wear Johnnie out when she gets back. And then in a minute she'd come back out with the funniest look on her face you ever sees in your life. And she'd look at Johnnie—who's a-sittin' there calm, eatin' hot cakes, and sausage, and fried potatoes, and ham and eggs, et cetera, et cetera, like he ain't afraid of any-

thing—and directly she flops down into a chair plumb beat out about Johnnie.

"'Lovely mornin', ma!' Johnnie would say, easy like, when he's through eatin'. And then he'd fold his napkin up, polite, push his chair back under the table, polished, hum a little tune while he's gettin' his hat off the peg, and then he'd go on over back the colt sheds and roll over'n over on the ground, laughin' fit to kill, to think how he fools his folks about him needin' a lickin' that mornin'. Dogged if it don't make me laugh every time I think of it!" says Jim. And he throws up his head and laughs hearty.

"Well," goes on Jim, gettin' up, "hand'er over, and us fellers'll go on to work now."

But Sidney ain't a-handin' it over any more'n he was a while back, and not so much.

"Jim," says he, desperate, after fidgetin' round a minute, "what'll you take for it?"

"Tain't for sale," says Jim. "It's the only one I got, and I may need it any time myself. Of course," he goes on, "I'm needin' money just now for that Emmert ranch, and if it's cash you're offerin', why, I don't know but I'll think of it."

And, at that, Sidney swallers a couple times, looks round wild a minute, and then I'm doggoned if that little rooster don't offer Jim a hundred dollars for it! He does, for a fact! Not cash down, you understand; but he'll pay Jim some time when he grows up. Well, Jim figgers a while on that, grave, and then he asks Sidney what he'll give for it right now. But Sidney ain't got a cent in money, and he says so, pretty gloomy.

"Well, then," says Jim, "I'll tell you what we'll do. You rummage round and see what you got to offer, and maybe we'll make a trade."

So Sidney hustles off, and directly he comes a-gallopin' back with the doggonedest lot of truck you ever see. And what you reckon that trade is? Well, sir, Sidney trades Jim a piece of shiney rock, three rusty buckles, a picture of a feller killin' a lion't Sidney cuts out of

a book, an old leather pocketbook't Sidney Hooker gives him once, one of his pa's old neckties, and a dead bat, for that there buckeye. He does, for a fact! And when Jim closes the deal, all sober, and carries the truck on over to the bunk house, Sidney goes a-streakin' for the house like if he waits a minute he's afraid Jim'll want to trade back.

"I don't see anything funny about it," says Jim, sharp, when Lem gets to laughin' about it that afternoon when we're washin' up for supper. "It's a honest trade, and worth all Sidney pays for it—to him. And, what's more," says Jim, ominous, when Lem keeps on a-sniggerin', "any light remarks made to Sidney about this here deal will be took serious by me, instant."

And, with that, Lem says he don't mean anything by laughin'; and we all goes on over to supper.

Well, Sidney's that chipper at supper it just does you good to see him; laughin', and talkin', and lookin' at Jim thataway. And when Mrs. Gates asks him if he ain't a-goin' to eat his beans, he tells her how he reckons he'll save himself for a hearty breakfast in the mornin'. And Jim he's feelin' pretty good himself, and keeps lookin' at Sidney thataway, too, till it's a wonder Mrs. Gates don't ketch on to somethin'. But she don't; and when we're rollin' cigarettes over by the corral, after supper, Jim says for once he's satisfied with his day's work. But 'tain't finished yet, for just before dark Sidney comes prowlin' back over, lookin' pretty gloomy.

"Jim," says he, "I don't reckon I can make it, after all. I'm afraid of the dark in the night."

"Dark, fiddlesticks!" snorts Jim. "Of course it's dark in the night. But who cares for the dark when you knows it's nothin' in the world but black daylight, anyway. That's all the dark is—just black daylight. And after a feller knows that, what does he care for it? Nothin'."

"Why, doggone it all!" says Jim. "Johnnie Woods is tickled to death it is dark, account then no one ketches on to all the fun he's a-goin' to have in the mornin'."

But Sidney ain't quite satisfied, and

so, finally, Jim gets cross, and lets on he wants to trade back. But Sidney won't do it.

"If I was *sure* 'twas only black daylight I wouldn't care," he says, wavery, "but I'm afraid."

"Very well, then," says Jim, "I'll prove it to you. Shut your eyes up tight." And Sidney does so. "Is it black?" says Jim.

"Sure," says Sidney.

"Keep 'em shut up tight, now," says Jim. "Are you afraid?"

"Not much I ain't," declares Sidney, stout.

"That's all, then," says Jim. "Open 'em, and you sees it's daylight, don't you? So, you sees, you makes black daylight by shuttin' your own eyes, instead of the old World a-shuttin' his, which is just the same, exactly, and you finds you ain't afraid of it. That's one of the easiest things to know there is," says Jim, superior.

"Well, I'll be dogged!" says Sidney, awed like. "And I never thought of it before in all my life!" And, with that, he goes to work shuttin' and openin' his eyes, rapid, till you wonders he don't make himself dizzy. "Jim," says he, final, "I ain't afraid of nothin' any more. Honest I ain't." And then as he goes on over toward the house, just a-feelin' fine, he turns and hollers back: "What time you-all a-comin' over to breakfast?" says he.

"Oh, about the usual time, I reckon," says Jim.

"All right," he hollers back, positive, "I'll be there a-eatin' with you in the mornin'."

And he is. When we walks in, next mornin', Sidney and his pa are already sittin' down, but Mrs. Gates is nowhere to be seen. And the minute we sits down Sidney starts grinnin' toward Jim, and, of course, old Jim grins back to him. And, with that, Sidney hauls that buckeye out of his pocket, sly, and just sticks a little bit of it above the table for Jim to see. Then they both starts grinnin' some more, of course, and Sidney begins wrigglin' round in his chair, makin' signs toward his door, mysterious.

It's a wonder Jimmie don't ketch on; but he don't. He a-sittin' there readin' in a paper, and not seein' a thing. So they keeps up their foolishness, till what with Sidney makin' them signs to Jim, and Jim makin' 'em back, with Sidney wrigglin' round in his chair like he's a eel, and both of 'em grinnin' horrible all the time, you'd think they're crazy.

Then of a sudden the door of Sidney's room opens, Mrs. Gates comes out, smilin' like she's pretty well pleased with somethin', and in the twinklin' of a eye Jim's as dignified as a blind horse, and Sidney's face takes on a look like hearin' of anybody doin' wrong would be very painful to him indeed. Mrs. Gates nods good mornin' to us fellers, and, as she passes Sidney's chair, she brushes her hand across his hair, affectionate, and bends down toward him a minute.

"He's mother's little man this mornin,'" we hears her whisper, and then she gives him a little pat on the back as she goes on toward the stove.

"He! He! He!" snickers Sidney toward Jim, a-stickin' that buckeye up over the edge of the table for him to see again. "He! He! He!" he giggles, right out loud.

And, with that, Jimmie, who's just layin' his paper down to begin eatin', turns and looks at Sidney, inquirin'.

"What you feelin' so gay about this mornin', son?" he says, smilin' toward him account he likes Sidney pretty well, if he is his own boy.

"About foolin' ma up so!" busts out Sidney, just tickled to death. "He! He! He!" he goes.

And, with that, Jimmie he looks at Mrs. Gates—who's come back from the stove—quizzical, and she looks at Sidney, astonished.

"How's that, son?" Jimmie says, final.

"With this here!" snickers Sidney, a-holdin' that buckeye up like the joke's on them, sure.

Well, Jimmie takes it in his hand, and he'n Mrs. Gates examines it thorough.

"Um!" says Jimmie, in a minute. "It certainly looks like you ought to fool

most any one with this. How'd you do it?"

And Jimmie's lettin' on like he's awful severe; but Mrs. Gates is that perplexed she's bewildered, and shows it.

Then Sidney sees he's gone a little too far. He looks at Jim, troubled, then toward the door of his room, furtive, and starts to swallerin'. But Sidney's truthful, and when he sees he's just got to tell, he answers him frank.

"The same way the judge tells Johnnie Woods to," says he.

And, with that, Mrs. Gates looks at Jimmie, and Jimmie looks at her, and then, simultaneous, like they're both thinkin' the same thing, they turns and looks at Jim Slater, hard, like they knows Jim of old.

"I reckon Johnnie Woods was a friend of yours, wasn't he?" says Mrs. Gates, suspicious.

"No'm," says Jim. "The judge was Johnnie's friend. Sort of a personal friend," he says, lame.

"Sure he was!" puts in Sidney, excited. "Sure he was! Why, ma," he says, convincin', "he was the one who gives Johnnie the buckeye to fool his folks with, about bein' licked of mornin's, same as Jim did me. And the dark is just black daylight, and I ain't afraid of it!" he goes on, boastful. "I ain't afraid to stay up all night, now, if it wasn't so doggoned cold!" says he.

"I see," says Mrs. Gates, thoughtful. "I see," she says. And then she turns toward Jim. "Then you are Sidney's personal friend?" she asks him.

"Yes, ma'am," says Jim, awkward. "I'm a personal friend of his."

"Yes," she says, emphatic, "you are. And what of me?" she asks, her eyes a-sayin' she thinks he's just fine.

And old Jim is that embarrassed he starts to coughin' dreadful. "I don't know's I knows, for sure, ma'am," he gets out, final. Then his lips gets to twitchin' a little, and he coughs again. "But I reckon a friend of Sidney's, ma'am, 'd be sort of a friend-in-law of yours!"

And with that he turns and hustles on out, like he's nothin' but a boy himself. He does for a fact!



The Scalp

By
Dorothea
Deakin

HER name was Victoria, and she was as pink as any old almond tree. Her eyes were of that soft blackness that you wake up in the night and remember with an aching heart, because you know so well that their smile will never be for you alone. She didn't trouble to talk much. Her beautiful existence was enough; *too* much for some of us.

But, although she was such a darling to look at, it was chiefly because she never made the faintest effort to charm us that we were all so thoroughly laid out and smashed up after she'd been at Green Valleys for a fortnight.

After ten days of it even Billy Madison gave in. He is the sort of gay, light-hearted young chap that most girls like, and he'd had it all his own way up to then, but from the first evening that Victoria bloomed suddenly on the dark staircase in a pink, billowy frock like an enormous La France rose, Billy's number was up.

It is true that she was nearly as silent as she was adorable, but her victory was always complete. If she lifted a black eyelash in your direction you just dropped everything and ran to see what you could do for her.

She showed no favor for some time. If she played golf with Billy, she went up the river with young Hammond, and took me for croquet. There were other girls in the hotel, I suppose, but after she appeared they seemed to melt away. We never saw them any more. Kind Molly Tredennis with the brown eyes and the smile seemed to have died suddenly in her first young charms. As for me, life has taught me to take what I

can get, and I am never too miserable in these crises to enjoy my own despair.

After some weeks of unswerving devotion, unslackening attention, and the most marvelous concentration I have ever seen, Billy seemed to gain upon us, and Victoria was obviously touched by his abject state. Billy never did things by halves. When she'd seen him ruin a new tweed suit by jumping in the lake just as he was, to get water lilies for her, and cover his clean white flannels with clay scrambling up a damp bank to gather honeysuckle, and other insanities of the kind, she began to single him out a little, and allow him to run her errands. Though I must say he had triumphantly pointed it out to me long before I noticed it myself.

"I'm going to make myself indispensable," said he. "There's nothing like it."

"You mean you'll become so useful to her that she'll miss you when you're gone?" I suggested kindly.

"Don't you flatter yourself," said he at once, "I'm not going, although I'm worried no end just now. In fact, I'm regularly up against it. If there's one thing that is going to spoil the whole blessed show, it's young George."

"Young George?" I asked in surprise, for I had forgotten his very existence.

"My blighted young nuisance of a brother," he went on gloomily. "In a moment of madness I promised to let him spend his summer holidays here with me. It can't be done now. I must arrange something with the head about taking the young un to the sea with his own kids—I can't do with young George on my hands at a critical

moment like this. He's got a way of following at my heels that might be awkward. I can't throw away my life's happiness for the sake of keeping an infernal promise to young George."

"No, of course you can't," said I, and for the moment the matter ended.

Billy wrote to the head of young George's school and made arrangements, then he put the matter out of his mind once for all. He little knew.

One evening, a week later, we were all sitting round Victoria on the balcony, and she was singing to us with a sort of cello thing which she called a *viol d'amore*, a little song about roses, and starry eyes, and moonlight, and fairy gold, and I was the only person who was detached enough to notice a small, limping creature plodding wearily up the long moonlit drive with a bundle slung by a stick over its shoulders. Perhaps it was some tramp child sent up to beg for dusky parents waiting in the offing.

Billy Maddison, distracted by his emotions, came up to the balustrade to rest his eyes by gazing across calm meadows bathed in moonlight, and find a little peace in the sight. The limping child caught his eye at once, and the effect was anything but soothing.

"Good heavens!" he cried. "It's young George!"

It was. He had run away for his promised holiday, and as his money ran out he had walked the last fifteen miles. I felt sorry for the little chap when I saw how footsore he was, and I admired the undaunted spirit which had brought him so quickly to his heart's desire.

He was short, and thick, and sandy, with a red, stolid face and rather large ears, and we all saw at once that in his eyes Billy was more than any brother. A hero rather; a divinity—and young George gazed at him with the blind, unreasoning adoration of a stout, ungainly puppy.

Billy plunged his fingers through his hair and gazed distractedly round him. Victoria looked across at the dusty child with a kind of contemptuous wonder and dark, unsmiling eyes.

No one could have admired young

George's looks. He was anything but an angel child. Perhaps if he had had golden curls and azure eyes she might have received him differently. But his hair was sandy and his ears large, and she moved away to the other end of the veranda, where Hammond and the others soon followed her.

Only Molly Tredennis came up and said:

"He seems very tired. I'm sure he's hungry. Suppose I take him in and get him something to eat?"

Billy thanked her shortly, and said that *he* would see to all that. I thought he might have put it more gracefully, but he was a bit above himself that evening.

"It's fate," he whispered hoarsely, as he went away. "Young George is going to ruin my life. I've always known it. Could a man's parents leave him a more infernal legacy? What have I done to deserve this? If I hadn't made that infernal promise—"

"And broken it," I suggested.

I had to have one wife at him, but when he came down to breakfast next morning he looked so white and wretched that I felt quite sorry for him, and thanked my stars that no girl on earth had the power to give me a sleepless night or make me miss a meal. Billy ate no breakfast, and he glowered in silent despair at the sight of young George stolidly putting away food.

"We were going on the river this morning," said he grimly, "she and I. But she's taken Hammond instead, because she was sure I should want to spend the morning with my little brother. She's angry already. Damn my little brother!" Her voice was quite changed to me."

His voice broke. I glanced from the square-faced child now digging into the marmalade jar with such apparent unconcern to Billy's tragic face, and on the spot I made a fool of myself.

"The morning's lost," said I cheerfully. "But nothing else need be. Young George is going to Merefleet with me this afternoon on the lake steamer. We're going to have tea there, and

quantities of cake. Cake and strawberry jam."

Young George cast a gleaming eye at me for a moment, and resumed operations. Billy held out his hand.

"You like her yourself," he said, trying to smile. "You're pretty decent, aren't you? You know you like her yourself."

I thought for a moment.

"Like her? Do I? I'm a bit in love with her, of course, but liking's different. Anyhow, I've no serious intentions toward any young woman on earth. I'd rather be hanged than married any day of the week. Young George and I are going to have the time of our lives together. You aren't going to send him back, I suppose?"

Young George looked up.

"He'd jolly well better not try," said he, with his mouth full.

"Oh!" said I. "And why jolly well not?"

"Remember what the cat did?"

"No," said I.

"It came back," said young George, and then I noticed the peculiar shape of his jaw—and thought Billy had better leave it as it was.

I didn't mind having him with me. And I sat and basked in the sunshine on the boat while he asked the captain and his crew a thousand or so odd things he happened to want to know.

There was a fair at Merefleet. We rode on painted antelopes and golden pigs, and made ourselves seasick on the Ocean Wave. I was told by a gypsy in a tent that I was to beware of blue-eyed deceit, but young George was told that he was going to have his heart's desire. We had no end of a time, young George and I, and when we got back I made the most of his sleepiness, and persuaded him to retire at once to his little cot. The next morning I came down late, and found that Billy had started off to the golf links with Victoria, and that young George had joined them uninvited.

"He seems a clinging little thing," said Molly Tredennis.

"He does," said I, and I was not surprised at that.

Billy looked as if he'd been tearing his hair instead of brushing it when he came down to lunch.

"She won't stand it," he said despairingly. "No girl would. You can see that she hates children. She never says a word to him, and just watches him with a look of horror in her eyes. Once she turned off with a shrug that made my blood run cold. I couldn't hear what she said, but I know she was in a regular royal rage. And there was I, going round and round like a blighted usher in a preparatory school, showing young George how to put, and begging her to forgive me between drives. I shall loathe young George before I've done with him, and it's not a nice thing to look forward to with your brother when you're all he's got."

"No," said I slowly. "But how amazingly spoiled and exacting she must be. Most girls pretend at least to like children. If she wasn't so infernally pretty——"

"Don't!" said poor Billy. "I shall come to an early grave if this goes on."

He did seem desperately up against it, poor devil, and once more in the kindness of my heart I took young George off in a motor for the afternoon. I also took care to make tempting arrangements to go ratting with him—at a farm he'd been told of in the stables—very early next morning. Rats make me nervous and rather sick, but I can show true friendship if I'm put to it.

With all these efforts I proved the poorest substitute for Billy, for young George as good as told me so a few days later. Billy was his god, and there was no blinking the fact. Over and over again the boy gave me the slip and followed so closely in the adored footsteps that Billy was half mad with despair. He never saw the girl alone.

Billy grew as white as a bone and as thin as a rat, and so quarrelsome and absent-minded that I became seriously alarmed. He's such a lonely young chap, somehow, and I've always tried to keep an eye on him. I felt sure that he was the sort of man who might go to pieces rather seriously over a love affair if something wasn't done. So un-

like me. There's not a lovely girl in the whole wide world I couldn't cheerfully give up forever.

I hadn't the least idea what his chances were with the beloved one, and I was too disgusted with her for her heartless treatment of the little boy to have the patience to try to find out. Rosy, glowing, and alluring, with a softness of black eyes and a melting kindness of look, she turned to stone at the sight of young George.

The other girls in the hotel were all over him, but Billy never noticed that. They made the child's life a burden to him. They kissed him when they met him on the stairs. They made him sick with chocolates and candy whenever Billy was out of the way, and young George took what he could get without responding to any of their advances. He endured their embraces with a very bad grace. He didn't find it easy to dissemble, it seemed, and he certainly didn't pretend to like them. There was only one person he wanted—that was clear. Desperately at last I did the only thing in my power, and put the case to young George himself.

"Old man," I said tactfully, "I've the greatest confidence in your judgment."

He regarded me with a suspicious eye.

"What are you getting at now?" said he.

"Well, I'm a bit worried about that old brother of yours," said I candidly.

He stared.

"You see," said I, "he wants to do rather a blighted sort of thing. He wants to marry a girl."

The mouth of young George opened wider and wider at this amazing news. I went on:

"It is rotten of him, but at a time like this a man isn't quite himself, and everybody else is likely to be a bit in the way. See? If you and I were to keep out of sight for a week or so and give him a run for his money—"

"But he likes me!" red-faced and open-mouthed, he started off at a rush. "Last holidays we saw three rats killed at Mallows Farms. He made a sail for my ship. I gave him two alleys and a commoney. He took me to the panto

at Christmas. We swapped a ripping penknife with six blades and a corkscrew for my new catty. He sent me two trick boxes last half. What does he want to go marrying for? I can bowl a jolly sight straighter than any old girl. You jolly well slip up if you think I'm in the way. He likes me. I know he does."

He stopped for breath. It was the longest speech I had ever heard young George make, and I fel. that I had achieved something to have made a strong enough impression to evoke it.

"Of course he likes you," said I diplomatically. "Every one does. I don't see how any one can help it. But he'll like you better still if you help him instead of hindering him when he wants help badly. If you like a person you're generally glad to lend a helping hand in time of trouble. If you want to do a decent thing for old Bill, you'll just make yourself scarce now. See?"

"Is it her with the pink face you mean, what says nothing and only smiles?"

His grammar left something to be desired, but the description was adequate. I said it was her with the pink face what only smiled.

Young George shot a long, strange look at me, then wriggled out of his chair and stumped out of the room. He wears very large boots. I hoped my words would sink in, but I was obliged to tell myself grimly, soon afterward, that I needn't have flattered myself, for when Billy appeared at lunch young George was clinging to him in a more complete and appropriating way than ever. And as far as I could see he didn't let him out of his sight for five blessed seconds till eight o'clock, when the dinner gong sounded, and he was sent off to bed.

Victoria smiled on Hammond all that evening; and when I knew that Billy had broken an engagement to go driving with her because he couldn't shake off young George, I didn't wonder, that, temporarily at least, he had lost the light of her eyes.

"It was awful," said he. "The little chap was crying. How could I take

him? I've hardly ever seen him cry. He kept singing: 'Let's just you an' me go off on our own for once, old un.' And I knew Victoria would sit as if she was frozen all the time if I brought him with us, and, anyhow, I've no chance now. She'll never look at me, now she knows that I've got young George permanently on my hands. She'll think these last weeks are a foretaste of what our life together would be if— Oh, dash!"

Next morning young George did not turn up to breakfast, and Billy and I exchanged glances of pure relief. Even if Billy's cause was lost forever, it was pleasant for him to feel free for once from his trotting shadow; pleasant for me to feel it no Christian duty to take him off Billy's hands.

We didn't begin to be anxious about him until dinner time, when Billy went up to his room, and found the note of farewell speared to the window sill with the penknife he'd swapped young George last half in return for a catapult which had borne disastrous results in connection with a greenhouse roof.

DEAR OLD UN: When you find this I shall have done a move. I don't see what you want a bothering girl for when you've got me. We were doing A I as we was. Sorry I didn't see that I was getting to be a bit of a newscase, but you can make up now for lost time and interrupshons.

Your affecks brother,
GEORGE.

"Do you suppose he's gone back to school?" I asked, as the brother stared at this precious effusion.

Billy looked at me in a scared sort of way.

"No," he said hoarsely. "The head's in Brittany with his blighted young family. That was where I meant the young un to spend his holidays. I say—" He stopped.

"Had he any money?" I asked.

"Five bob, if he hadn't spent it on ginger beer."

"He's all right," said I easily. "He'll be back to-morrow. I dare say he's only gone over to the cottage of one of the stablemen. He's popular in the stables, I gather. I heard him singing

to a choice audience yesterday. It was a nice song—

"Sing us a song about something to eat And give the girls a rest."

Billy stopped me in a choked sort of voice.

"Don't," he cried. "You don't know young George. I must find him at once or—"

I watched him at dinner, and what with the coldness of that detestable girl and the worry about the boy he never touched a morsel. He simply played with his food, and, after dinner, he cleared out and went to the stables to make inquiries.

I told Hammond what had happened in the hall, and Victoria was standing near enough to hear if she wanted to—I hoped she would.

"Billy's a bit above himself to-night," I said. "In fact, he's altogether up against it. Young George has cut off because he thinks he's in the way."

"Where to?" Hammond asked at once, but the girl stood there playing with a pink fan and scowling at it.

I suppose she didn't like the idea that anything but her own caprices could upset Billy so thoroughly. No doubt she had flattered herself that all his pallor and want of appetite were due to her fatal beauty. It is useless for me to pretend that I no longer felt her charm myself, but she had neglected me enough lately to make me rather pleased to have a wife at her.

"He's a sensitive little chap," I went on, with a glance out of the corner of my eye at the sullen darkness of her expression. "He saw that he wasn't wanted, and it cut him up a bit. In fact, Billy's got a horrible idea that young George has done something rather desperate. He makes a little tin god of his brother, you see."

I heard a rustle beside me, and the lovely presence of the hard-hearted one was lost to us when we turned.

Hammond watched her hurrying upstairs with an uncomfortable abstraction.

"She won't endure a divided alle-

giance," he said rather bitterly. "She's very wonderful, but she's as hard as iron. I'm sorry about young George, but he'll turn up to-morrow, all right. You see if he doesn't. She won't stand even so much of a rival as young George. It must be all or nothing with her."

It was a curious thing that, although we were all more or less in love with her, there wasn't a man of us who had not deplored this unwomanly hardness and want of sympathy of hers about young George.

We did not see her again that night. She was so angry with us for allowing ourselves to be worried and anxious about anything but her that she would not come down and expose herself to the ignominy of becoming a secondary object of interest.

In the morning we heard that she had gone. The dragon aunt was to follow in a day or two, but Victoria herself was too indignant to endure another hour of it; she had gone.

We were aghast. Green Valleys was lost, abandoned, desolate. Molly Tredennis and the others emerged timidly from their obscurity and tried to cheer us; but, consider—our sun, our moon, our radiant and incomparable star had vanished. What could these flickering candles do to lighten the darkness into which she had plunged us when she went away?

We forgot to blame her. We thought of nothing now but our irrevocable loss. We were angry with Billy for driving her away in disgust, and Billy, staring with tragic eyes at her empty chair, was the most pitiable sight of all. Victoria had in truth left a desert, but no one on God's earth could call it peace. It was the abomination of desolation.

Billy, haggard and shattered by his double loss, went to young George's school to try to find traces of his brother, and we all made expeditions in our own feeble way in search of the little chap, partly to drown our memories of the other lost one, partly because we liked Billy and felt uncomfortable about young George.

But our efforts were fruitless. So

were Billy's, it seemed, for he came back without any fellow traveler, and said the affair was now in the hands of Scotland Yard, and he could do no more. He sat in his room, and stared alternately at the portraits of the lost Victoria and the lost George, and every half hour or so he took a faded rose out of his pocketbook and young George's last letter, and stared at them.

Two days crawled by on leaden feet, and little by little Green Valleys emptied itself of guests because of the cloud of depression which overhung its friendly walls.

And then, on the third day the world came to an end—or so it seemed to Hammond and me and the few of us who were left.

We were sitting on the veranda talking in depressed whispers. Billy came out, and we fell into silence. It was a languid afternoon, with a golden air, and as we sat there, idly smoking, the amazing thing happened.

I was stretched out in a long chair with my eyes shut. When I opened them Victoria herself was standing in the middle of the veranda with the sun on her face. She wore some kind of cool, silky, gray traveling dress and a white veil like a snowstorm, and she looked very dusty and tired. Clinging to her hand and dress, with alarmed eyes, and the blackest face and largest and dustiest boots I have ever seen—was young George.

Billy said something under his breath and stood like a stone.

"Another scalp?" Hammond murmured.

Very tired, and drooping like a lovely lily, Victoria stood and smiled at Billy Maddison. She had no eyes for the rest of us, it seemed.

"I've brought him back to you," she said, in a low voice; and Billy said nothing. He just stood and looked from one to the other of the two lost ones.

"Where did you find him?" I asked, coming forward and studying young George with my eyeglass as if he had been a rare specimen of some kind. He was rubbing his red head up and down

against Victoria's gray dress like an affectionate cat. Amazing!

Victoria smiled very sadly.

"I'm going to tell you all about it," she said. "I'm going to tell everything. It will be a sort of penance."

"Take a chair to it, mademoiselle," Hammond suggested quietly, offering one.

"No." She shook her head with a sort of proud and lovely humility which I found infernally touching. I was beginning to feel—but never mind.

"You all think I'm hard, and conceited, and spoiled"—she always spoke very slowly—"but I'm not. Really, I'm not. I'm only stupid."

Billy sat down suddenly, and said something we couldn't hear.

"I'm very, very stupid," she said again. "I am silent because I never know what to say. I'm not conceited. I'm not hard. You think I hate children, don't you?"

She looked pleadingly at me, but what could I say? Her voice shook a little as she asked the question, and we enviously saw a little gloved hand creep round young George's shoulder.

"Oh, I don't hate them. It's only that I'm frightened of them. I'm an only child, and I've never known any other children. I don't know how to talk to them. I don't know what to say to them. I am too stupid to play with them. When I want to be nice I can only just stand and stare like a silly."

Young George suddenly looked up at her and grinned with the most heart-whole sympathy and understanding that I have ever seen.

"Me, too," he said.

Victoria's lovely gaze was more than motherly then. It was divine when she met young George's eye.

"I didn't know what to say to him. I don't know what to say to any of you, but if I hold my tongue and smile with you others it seems enough."

"Too much for most of us," Hammond murmured.

"When I heard that he'd gone," she went on, with a kind of muffled sob, "I felt as if I'd murdered him. You see, the more I liked him, the more impossi-

ble it seemed for me to show it. You can't understand how any one could be so stupid, but it's true. I'm not silent because I'm proud or disdainful or anything like that. I'm silent because I can never think of anything to say. But stupid as I am, I do remember things, and I remembered something then that I'd heard him telling one of the servants about all the beautiful big ships at Liverpool that went out to sea, and his longing voice then made me feel sure that he had run away. You see, he loves the sea."

"Not half," said young George encouragingly.

"Do you mean," Billy asked, coming forward at last, "that you've been all the way to Liverpool to—"

She laughed in an ashamed way.

"I got a detective, and we soon found him. He was buying apples and cream tarts—getting ready to stow himself away, and then—when I'd got him quite to myself—I—" She hesitated, with red cheeks. "It—it wasn't so difficult to talk to him, although even then I think he did most of the talking."

Young George looked at his brother.

"It's a lie," he said, with his usual frankness. "She said a lot of things. She said I wasn't never in the way. She said I never had been in the way. She said I never should be in the way. She said she never wouldn't have taken no notice of you if you hadn't been so jolly decent to your young brother."

Billy was looking at her now, white and red by turns, with imploring eyes. I turned to Hammond with a sigh. The others had gone.

"Oh, come along," said I. "This is no place for us."

She was dusty. Her dark hair was wispy. She was distinctly crushed, but she had never seemed to me so utterly desirable. For the first time in my life, I found it more of an irritation than a relief to know that inevitably, once for all, she would never be mine.

"What about taking young George with us?" Hammond asked, with a backward glance as he followed me.

"No!" said I grimly. "We'll leave 'em young George. This is his little lot."



Fate and Patricia

By Carrington A. Phelps

PATRICIA KELLY was a young woman of twenty who had earned her own living ever since 1900, when her mother had died and her father had soon followed her because the trusts took the bread out of an honest workingman's mouth. Mr. Kelly, when not explaining this latter fact, had essayed to fill with Third Avenue whisky the vacancy left by the before-mentioned bread, with such modest success that he presently died, and speedily, and not lacking the perfect contentment that comes only to those who feel they have faithfully done their entire duty.

Patricia, left alone in the world at the tender age of ten, was taken in hand by a distant female relative of her deceased father, who kept a boarding house, and who for three years and a week utilized his offspring as a combination waitress, housemaid, and scullion. At this point Patricia rebelled, ran away, and obtained work in a department store at three dollars a week.

For a year her only name was Cash, and then she became a bundler, or parcel wrapper, at three-fifty a week.

You will ask how Patricia lived, and you will receive no adequate reply because not even Patricia knows how she managed to keep her little soul alive in her little body those halcyon days. Fortunately she was employed in the grocery department, and, beyond doubt, the many prunes, peanuts, and similar body builders which she eternally consumed aided Patricia in her survival among the fittest.

Presently, after another year's apprenticeship, they raised her salary fifty cents a week, and made her a junior saleswoman to old Mr. Finkle,

behind the canned-goods counter. Life was easier for ten months, especially as the tenth month was spent in the hospital, which was far pleasanter than the department store.

It happened this way: Patricia lived in a tiny garret room, for which she paid six dollars a month, furnishing it herself. This left her ten dollars with which to feed her stomach and clothe her body. Now, Patricia was not physically strong, and you will perceive that it was not precisely gilded luxury that preyed on her health. One day she fainted in the department store, and when they found they could not resuscitate her they carried her into the ladies' waiting room and called an ambulance.

"Starvation!" snapped the white-uniformed young surgeon as he rose from a somewhat lengthy examination of Patricia's skinny anatomy.

And he leisurely ordered windows opened, and screens arranged, and water brought until the stretcher came, and Patricia went quietly down, feet first, and into the ambulance, and to the hospital.

Here, under the young doctor's ministrations, she revived, and for a whole month ate, and drank, and rested peacefully, and took on weight, and filled in the hollows under her eyes and about her neck and body, and put healthy layers on her lean legs and arms.

And when they pronounced her fit again she hardly recognized the bright-eyed, pink-cheeked young hoyden who stared back at her from the mirror.

So she went back to the department store again, and it was not a merry life, even when they raised her salary the following year another fifty cents a week, making a grand total of eighteen

dollars a month, or two hundred and ten dollars a year. For Patricia it was a glorious annuity. But her heart hungered, as women's hearts will, and she suffered, because she was not popularly pretty. She had no admirers that she cared to tolerate, and her nearest approach to a conquest had been when somebody once sent her a little opal ring with her initials inside—and even that somebody had forgotten to insert a card.

Now, there was a queer sort of spark burning somewhere inside Patricia. It was like the little red glow of a cigarette at first, and perhaps it was what prevented Patricia from leading what has been termed "an easier life" than working in a department store.

But the queer little spark inside of Patricia did not remain the same, but burned on and on, until one day, as she was passing through the sheet-music department, where Mr. Gussie Brown jabbed rag and sentimental on a mahogany horror from nine till five with half an hour for lunch, that spark came into its own.

For Mr. Gussie, weary of "popular" and momentarily deserted of audience, had lapsed carelessly into chords, and for the first and only time in his life struck four perfect and successive harmonies, that caused Patricia to stop stock-still, listening, with her arms full of oxtail soup, canned.

Then Mr. Gussie banged a discord, turned, leered, and Patricia passed on, with a lump in her throat, and, instead of the red spark, a little blue flame dancing hurtfully in the exact centre of her heart.

But old Schmidt knew what ailed her. Old Schmidt knew, when he saw her standing there with two big foolish tears quivering on the brink of what somebody once called "those magic, fathomless wells," when he only meant her eyes. It seems he had just finished giving a lesson to one of his pupils down in his barn of a Washington Square studio, and this pupil was running over a few chords of Beethoven when Schmidt heard steps coming down the

stairs. And this part he always loved to tell himself.

"It was to me nothink," he would say, "till der steps stop outside my door, which is open, you understand. Der steps stop maybe for a minute, und I go tiptoe over to catch der listening landlady, maybe. I looks through der crack of der door, und I sees a child standing with her han's on her heart, so, like it hurts, and panting, so—and staring, staring like at a ghost through der door, und with tears in her eyes. I think it is fear at first, und then I know suddenly it is der music because I haf seen them that way, und I walk out without noise, und she runs, und I catch her, und drags her back, squealing, und sits her in der corner still squealing, und then I plays for her. You know when I haf der right ones to listen or if I am alone I play."

"Well, I play that way, und soon I make her cry, und then I make her angry, und rage, und then I make her all happy—and I know I haf here der soul of der artist—der true artist soul—trying to get out. Und so I haf her to play, und she cannot. So I haf her to sing, und she did not know what I mean, und I tell her to say A-h-h-h, so, with der chord, und first she squeak, ee-e-e-ee—und then she shout, oo-o-o-oo, und then suddenly—then—ach!"

Here old Schmidt would put his finger tips to his lips with a reverent, slow sweep of his arm, as though mere words could not possibly convey his meaning.

"It was a *voice!*" he would cry, so suddenly you jumped. "A *voice*, I tell you—ach—such a *voice*—trembling, struggling down there, trying to get out, strong und vunderful! Und sweet! Ach, so sweet!"

And he would tell you how he had begun with her then and there, how she could sing, did sing, and how, before she was through, she would sing as could only the very, very few.

The next day old Schmidt sent for a quiet-voiced woman, who came in a carriage and pair, and who, when she heard Patricia sing, laid her purse on the table and told old Schmidt to go ahead. Later, he explained to Patricia

that she was to receive a musical education at the hands of the quiet lady, and at this Patricia rebelled; but was presently brought around again when craftily told it would be in the nature of a loan, which Patricia would, of course, eventually repay.

And so, to make a long story short, Patricia began to be a singer, and studied French, and Italian, and German, and vocalized, and exercised, and ate, and slept, and eventually crystallized into a healthy, active young woman with a wonderful voice, a big enthusiasm, and a reliable appetite.

It took three years to undo the work of the department store, but it made a clear-eyed, splendid creature of her who would never have been recognized as the former bilious, half-starved child of the prune and peanut diet.

Hitherto the veil has been willfully drawn, as it were, before the personal attractions and detractions of Patricia Kelly. But now that she has become presentable you may judge for yourself. She was not beautiful, neither had she the neck of a swan, witching eyes, or teeth of pearl, or shell-like ears, or yet hair of spun moonbeams. She was a medium-sized, rather slender, active young person, with good hands and feet, a well-molded head, and features that, save for a somewhat upturned nose, were singularly regular.

When you looked again, as you always did, you saw that her mouth curved in perpetual good humor, that her eyes danced mischievously, that her whole face was luminous with an expression of honest, healthy enjoyment, mixed with a strong undertone of sturdy sense, partly evidenced by the demure little lines running down from either nostril past the corners of her mouth.

And Patricia had a voice. Of that you may be very sure. Jollops, the poet, who starved in the house next door, used to write what he called madrigals, or rondels, or something of the sort, on that voice when he heard her practicing. But Jollops was not the only one who took joy from her singing, especially

when the day's grind was over, and she sang snatches of little ballads, or improvised delicious lullabys, or burst riotously into some of the operas—all to the intense disgust of old Schmidt, who held out for technique and scales, but secretly delighted in her lighter moments, none the less.

Jollops was not the only one, for one day while they were practicing a boy knocked on the studio door, deposited a huge bunch of roses, and bolted. Among the flowers was a note reading: "To the unknown singer, who has made sweeter for me so many hours that might otherwise have dragged by in pain." There was no signature, and Schmidt, with a contemptuous grunt, passed over note and flowers to Patricia.

"Why—they're for me!" she cried delightedly, burying a pink nose amid deeper pink. "My first flowers," she soliloquized. "I wonder who he could be!"

"Humph!" growled old Schmidt. "How do you know it is a he?"

She looked up, staring. "Why—it may be a woman—mayn't it? Oh, but I know it's a man, a fine big man, with light hair."

"Bah!" grunted Schmidt. "Sing that over again, without der mistake."

Patricia sang it over again, this time without the mistake; but all that day, and for many, many days, she speculated with all the curiosity of her sex on the identity of the flower sender. It was in vain that she made inquiries among the neighboring houses as to invalids, and studied the windows of rear yards, and tried to trace the shop whence the roses had come, for not a clue could she discover.

"It's a man," she told herself. "'Course it's a man, the bashful idiot."

"It's a woman," said old Schmidt, observing her studying the card one day. "It's a woman. Look at der handwriting."

"Hmm!" retorted Patricia pleasantly. "It's a man. A nice, pleasant, big, blond man. See if it isn't."

"Bah!" said Schmidt. "Let us to work!"

It was one evening, some two weeks after, that Patricia, swinging down the avenue just as the chimes were striking six, came upon that episode she was to remember all the days of her life. She had crossed the street and was in the act of stepping up on the sidewalk when her eyes raised, to look squarely into a man's face. For the fraction of a second she was held fast by his eyes, and it was only as she became aware of her hesitant feet that she pulled herself together and plunged impetuously past the other, who had come to an abrupt and staring halt.

At first she feared that she had unwittingly snubbed some old acquaintance, so familiar had he been, and then, as she conned swiftly her little circle of friends, she told herself that she had never in her life met this man before. She studied his features, sharply printed on her memory, seeing a smooth, brown, and homely face, with a large nose, humorous eyes, a square mouth, and trap-like jaws. Clearly, a strong man, she decided, since he had so forcibly impressed upon her his personality.

That night she dreamed of him, and thereafter his face lingered with her, pleasantly enough, for a week, when she cannoned into him as she entered old Schmidt's studio one morning. He gasped, muttered an apology, and galloped off in panic embarrassment, which pleased her. She found the master nerve-ridden and incoherent.

"A pupil," he explained. "He come I know not where, und he has a voice like der mad bull—no tone, no feeling, und he insist und he insist that I shall teach him to sing—to *sing!*" He waved his arms helplessly before him. "To sing, with that voice! I tell him it is impossible, but he say he must sing because his soul must be expressed. Soul! Hah! Der soul of a elephant! Der voice of der bull! Bah!"

"Who is he?" asked Patricia.

"What is it to me who he is? There's his card." He strode the length of the room. "He will kill me. He will come again und again, und I will say it is impossible, und he will laugh, und sit down, und sing as he did sing to-day

with that voice, und I shall go mad, you hear me? Mad!"

And he sank into a chair, his head in his hands, groaning.

Patricia picked up the card. Across its white face was a name—James B. Hicks. She studied it thoughtfully. Save as the conventional evidence of a man's identity it meant nothing to her.

She had had a thorough look at him, and she found him nearer and more comprehensive than on the occasion of their last meeting. It was as though they were old friends, but as old friends who had parted the week before, on the avenue.

Meditating, she frowned, and found it fascinating to dream an idle moment by while old Schmidt rummaged for scores. Vaguely she had always, and, until now, unconsciously painted her hero as a big, blond man with a square jaw, and gray eyes, and an awkward shyness. And these qualifications James B. Hicks seemed to possess.

Furthermore, there was a sense of intimacy about him that disturbed her, for even the inflection of his "Beg pardon" seemed an old, familiar note. She speculated on the reasonableness of such ancient theories as the soul mate and the affinity—of late somewhat shabby from too much wear in the divorce courts. It would be strange indeed, she thought, if the world were, after all, peopled with half mates, seeking eternally their proper union. And, if strangely true, stranger still would it be were James B. Hicks her preselected half. Fate would thus have taken a hand in their affairs, would have, first of all, sent them together on Fifth Avenue, in this maelstrom of millions—as if two swimmers should meet in mid-ocean.

And fate, once interested, would continue, would send him to old Schmidt to take music lessons, would cause them to collide at his door, and would most assuredly arrange that they should soon meet again. If this, indeed, were fate, then it was marvelous, and fascinating, and irresistible.

If this were romance opening at last its rare and magic doors, then she, Pa-

tricia Kelly, would be the last, the very last, to turn aside. Why else should heroes, doors, and fate exist if not for romance? Why else romance if not for love? Why else love if not for happiness?

"Sing!" barked old Schmidt, striking a chord. Then, turning at her hesitancy: "Vy you so red? Hein?"

"The—the sun!" cried panic-stricken Patricia. "The sun!"

Patricia's premonition that fate, once started in the game, would finish it, proved itself within sixty hours, when she found herself being crabbedly presented by her music master to one James B. Hicks—who choked, and would have fled again had his limbs proved serviceable.

But this terror wore away speedily under her sunny smile, and presently they were gossiping quite easily—and none but Patricia knew how her heart was thumping.

And from this time on their understanding grew apace, so that within the fortnight she had become "Patricia," and he "James," and in quick moments even "Jimmy."

This closer intimacy revealed, among others, the fact that he was a young doctor with promising practice, a flatter family tree, and an acrimonious aunt, who, if she died in a sufficiently chastened frame of mind, would leave him a considerable fortune. Also, he was apparently much interested in music, and, aside from an insatiable interest in certain bacilli, a delightfully rational and fascinating young man. Also, and, stranger to relate, he had but recently lived within a stone's throw of Schmidt's studio—in fact, two doors away. When this fact came out, Patricia clapped her pink palms in delight.

"Oh!" she cried. "How strange!"

"Yes," he admitted hesitantly. "I—had blood poisoning, you know. I was convalescing, at a friend's. I used to hear you sing."

"Sing?" queried Patricia blandly.

"Yes. It was great. Time flew then." He sighed.

A dancing ray of suspicion played suddenly in her eyes.

"Hmm! You liked it?" He nodded. "And it 'made sweater the hours that otherwise might have dragged by in pain,' didn't it?" He grinned sheepishly under her narrow gaze. "James B.," she cried, and, seizing his coat, would have shaken him, but that she only shook herself in the endeavor. "James B., you sent those roses!"

He blushed, and his own laughter did not comfort him.

"Yes," he admitted, "I did send 'em, Patricia; and, what's more, I'll send 'em again."

For an instant she stared amazedly at her joyous discovery. Then she frowned, and touched her forehead in pretty perplexity.

"It's strange," she said. "It's all so strange. First you happen to live near by, and then you happen to hear me sing, and then you send roses, and then you—"

"What then?" he demanded.

"Why, then you admit sending the roses," she finished demurely.

And so their mutual interest waxed in its brilliancy and its glory because, being real, it was the newest and most wonderful thing in all the world—except to old Schmidt.

"Nonsense und madness it is!" he would growl to Patricia. "You haf der artist soul, und you waste it on that bellowing cave animal. Und you think it love, maybe? Kraft-Ebbing will tell you it is not love, but fetishism, der memory of something, or somebody else. Bah! You like him because maybe long ago once you haf seen a play with a hero like him, or haf a dolly that haf eyes like his, or read der fairy story about der prince with der big nose. I tell you, man can control der love business if he wish, und that it should not be let to run wild. Do not talk to me of destiny, und such nonsenses, und—vy should I talk? Only if you love this man you vill not love your art, because you cannot two masters serve at der same time."

"But I didn't say I loved him," Patricia would protest.

"*Bah! Go your own way!*" And he would stamp off, raging.

And go her own way she did, as maids will always do, until there came that other fateful moment when she met him once again on the avenue, face to face, at the exact hour, upon the exact spot as when her heart had tried to say here was her man of dreams come to life. With her greeting, she cast a quick glance around, and then, as the hour chimed, a vague fear smote her.

"It was here," she cried, "the same hour—I first saw you!"

"Yes," he answered gently, for timid, they had not as yet spoken of that encounter. "Yes. We met here, at this hour." She flashed him gratitude. "Oh, I didn't forget," he added. "I never forget. Let's dine."

They went that night to Madame Bruyere's, that well-loved and hidden place of grape-full wines, unprofessional bohemians, and perfect cookery. They talked of everything under the sun, and presently, with the coffee, of Patricia's new-found streak of fortune—a season's engagement in grand opera. Small it was, of course—in the chorus—but a beginning.

"All I want," she said, "to start me on the way up."

"What of *me*, though?" he asked, in sudden gravity.

There was a little silence, and her great eyes dropped lest he see too much in them.

"What of *me*," he insisted, "when you embark on this career of yours?"

"You? Oh," she parried, "you will be a famous doctor, and will always send me roses when I am a *prima donna*."

She laughed a little, because she was afraid.

It was a strange place for a proposal, and yet not strange, because such things choose their own time and place, waiting on no man.

He tapped the table sharply with his forefinger.

"There's nothing else for it!" he said quietly. "You must marry me!"

She gasped inwardly. Here was no

honeyed diplomacy. He had come to the point coolly and—basely.

She rallied.

"Why marry?" she queried, and not an eyelid flickered as she looked back at him.

It was his turn to pull himself together.

"Why," he began lamely, "I thought we—cared enough for one another."

She smiled upon him gently, masterfully now.

"How do you know we would get on together, even admitting we cared?" she asked.

"Oh, I *know* that," he began brightly. "I know that. Why, *anybody* could get on with *you*!"

"Even your Aunt Abigail?"

"She will be the next to fall in love with you."

Patricia shook her head.

"She doesn't know much about me, and neither do you. You are going to marry in your own set, and have a large and happy family, and become a thoroughly responsible citizen."

"Exactly," he retorted. "That is what I, too, say."

But she flushed under his mischievous eye.

"I mean it," she hastened. "You have position, responsibilities, and I haven't. You and I are different. My mother died of a broken heart—or hard work, and my father drank himself to death. I worked in a department store until I was seventeen. Mrs. Ferris heard my voice, and she's paying for my tuition and expenses now—every cent!" She paused, twisting nervously her little opal ring. "You see," she continued, "there isn't really much Kelly 'family,' is there? We could never marry, you and I, even," she added, raising her eyes defiantly, "even if I cared enough, which I don't!"

He reached over and laid a brown hand on her little, white one that fluttered, and then lay still.

"You're an honest little brick," he said. "And you *do* care. Otherwise you wouldn't have told me something you thought was for my own good."

"Oh, no!" she protested swiftly.

"No! It wasn't that. It was only that I wanted to be square with you."

"You've always been that," enigmatically. "So marry me."

It was like juggling her own heart to have to smile sweetly and say: "What nonsense, Jimmy! Why, you haven't known me three months—you child of impulse!"

He flared in a sudden flash of hot indignation.

"Impulse, you say? *Impulse!* Listen to me!" He leaned closer, and the rough clasp of his hand hurt her deliciously. "The first time I saw you I fell in love with you—your sweetness—your dearness—you! Understand? I swore then I'd marry you. Why do you suppose I started vocal lessons with Schmidt—think of *me* trying to sing—if it wasn't so I might know you? And did you think I'd forgotten meeting you that night on the avenue—when I had been walking every night for a month out there expressly to see you, to see if you would notice me?"

"Notice you?"

"Or do you think it was impulse that brought me to meet you at the dear, identical time and place again, to-night?"

"To-night?"

"Or that made me go where I could hear your voice while I was convalescing; or that made me send you those roses after you'd been singing happiness into my heart for months and months? Was all this impulse?" His voice softened as he saw the look of helpless amazement in her eyes. "No, dearest person—it wasn't impulse. It was just caring more than all the whole big world for little Patricia Kelly. That's what it was. That's why you must marry me. That, and because you care."

She looked at him long and intently.

"So," she said at length. "It wasn't fate, after all. It was all you. And all the time you knew me? How?"

He laughed happily.

"I always knew you were in the world—somewhere, and that I loved you—because you loved me—and it was fate, from the very first it was fate. It is

fate. It will be fate always." He leaned to her again. "Stop jesting. You love me! Tell me so. Tell the truth!"

Her eyes glistened, and her breast heaved above her tumultuous heart. Suddenly she threw back her head in all the pride of her young womanhood.

"Yes!" she breathed. "I love you! It's the truth, so why shouldn't I say it? I love you!" She stretched forth a hand, and placed it on his arm with a sudden, vibrant gesture. "I love you! Do you hear me, Jimmy Hicks?" And her voice deepened with quick richness. "I'm a little sorry for you, too, because it's so much bigger than your love for me is—or was—or ever will be!"

"Oh—woman, dear!"

He choked a little with the swift happiness she had given him, and he caught her hand to him, dumb. She watched him tenderly, as a mother might her sensitive, triumphant boy. Then, to help steady him, she held up her left hand roguishly.

"No engagement ring," she bantered.

"What's that, then?" he demanded, pointing to the little opal on her third finger.

"That? Ah-ha! That's a gift from my former fiancé. Oh, indeed," in feigned dignity, "I've been *much* engaged, sir!"

He grinned joyously.

"You've always been?" he inquired.

"Always—nearly." But her conscience smote her. "Never, Jimmy," she said. It was too dear for jesting.

"Just the same," he continued irrelevantly, "you've been engaged all the time."

"To whom?"

"To me—you darling."

"Hmm! By fate, eh?" Her eyes twinkled.

"Yes, by fate. You don't believe it? Listen! Remember the time you fainted in the department store—and the ambulance, and the ambulance surgeon, and the hospital, and—"

"Yes!" she cried, with wide and staring eyes. "But—"

"I was the ambulance surgeon."



The INTERRUPTIONS of BILLY.

By
Sarah Guernsey Bradley.

NHAD cleaned and filled my curious old copper inkstand, the first a ceremony of infrequent occurrence. Perhaps that is because I am lazy; perhaps not. Perhaps it is because I can *see* that piece of copper, day in and day out, without minding *much*, but whenever I take it in my hands, every least memory of that day when Roger and I browsed around a lot of those quaint little East Side shops and he bought it for me, comes back to me with a rush. It is the one thing I kept, when Roger and I came to the parting of the ways. However, that is mere detail.

I had scrubbed my favorite gold stub. I had settled down at my writing table for a full day's work with that feeling which comes now and then on a clear, brisk morning after a good night's rest, that my gray matter was in fine running order, and that I could spin a fair, salable yarn.

And then—the bell of my box of a workshop rang sharply, and, with a smothered groan, I opened the door, and in walked Billy. Now, Billy is a nice chap, oh, one of the very nicest, pink-cheeked, blue-eyed cubs that ever chuckled all through a serious play, or messed up a hand at bridge. But he *is* an interruption, there are no two ways about *that*, and never but once was he more of a one than on this particular morning.

"Greetings!" chortled Billy. "Happy New Year! How fresh and fit you're looking this morning. You weren't

watching the old year out, I'll be bound!"

"Not I! I've put that away with *other* childish things," and dear, I might have added, but didn't.

"In lavender?"

I looked at Billy sharply. Once in a blue moon he surprises you with his keenness. But he looked guileless.

"Perhaps," I smiled.

"But you certainly do look well. Blessed are those who go to bed early, for their eyes shall shine in the morning! That wonderful red apron—"

"My penwiper, please," said I, glancing at the beinked garment.

"Is vastly becoming. Jolly morning, isn't it?"

"Fine," I agreed, but without the enthusiasm the subject warranted.

"Pretty good old world!"

"Yes. What do you want, Billy?"

"Want? A cigarette more than anything in the world at this present moment, thank you."

He took one from his case as he spoke, lighted it, settled himself luxuriously in the most comfortable chair in the room, and smiled cheerfully at me.

"Come, now, what else do you want?"

"What else?" he echoed, his eyes more round than ever. "Why, I've come to call on you! I can't say that you seem exactly tickled to death—"

"We-ell," I hesitated. I suppose even Billys have feelings tucked away somewhere.

"Go on, don't mind me," said Billy imperturbably.

"Well, I had expected to work all the morning." No one ever comes to see me in the morning. All my friends know that then the busy bee is as a sluggard by comparison.

"*You had?* What a foolish idea on New Year's Day!"

"Best day in the year for making a beginning. Besides, I need a new hat and a fur coat. Come, now, what can I do for you?"

"*Do* for me? Well, I like that! Here I am, head over ears in love with you."

I smiled. I was so used to Billy's hyperbolic protestations.

"Rushing in to see you in the first respectable hour of the first glorious day of the glad New Year! The streets are filled with the carcasses of the people I've knocked down in my mad haste to distance all me hated rivals by being the first to wish you Happy New Year, and you calmly drop a neat little icicle down my back by asking me what you can do for me! Oh, cruelty, thy name is *Malvina!*"

And Billy leaned back in his chair comfortably, and blew a cloud of rings.

My patience was oozing; so were those ideas that had been rampant, clambering to be put on paper, before the arrival of Billy. To judge from his attitude, he was there for the day at least. And why was yet to be disclosed. The last time that Billy had bounded in on me unceremoniously, it had been to use my workshop as a meeting place for himself and that pretty little fool of a Mrs. Travers. Of course, he never actually admitted it, but I knew it was so. I had had my suspicions on two or three other occasions that I was being made useful. But that time it was all perfectly apparent.

Billy had not been to see me in three months. Milly Travers had never been to see me but once before in her whole silly life. And it certainly was more than pure coincidence that Billy and she should, on that particular day, have blown in to see me within ten minutes of each other. I called Billy up that night, and scolded him roundly, for if there is one thing I can't stand it's being made a convenience of. Then, too,

I think Billy is too good for the Tame Robin business. Of course, he denied everything.

But the next day the simpleton sent me a dozen glorious, long-stemmed American Beauties, and as he had never given me so much as a buttercup before in his life, I needed no further proof.

That was nearly six months ago, and I'm sure Billy has forgotten all about Milly Travers by this time, but I was wondering what other matron or maid would presently put in an appearance, for scoldings roll off Billy like water from the back of the proverbial duck.

"As I was saying——" I began.

"*Oh, were you?* I hadn't heard any one say anything for at least an hour!" Billy smiled serenely.

"I *do* need a hat and a fur coat," I went on, paying no attention to his interruption.

"They ought to be cheap after to-day —January mark-down."

This pearl of commercial wisdom was just about what I needed to send my irritation to the boiling point.

"Now, really, *Billy*!" I pounded the arm of my chair as I spoke—"while it's great to see you——"

"Can't I see that?"

"I *must* get to my writing." The dismissal sounded brutal, but then I knew Billy, and, with him, the "mild power" fails to cure.

"Go right ahead—no pun intended—I'll sit here and read."

He picked up a book, and turned the pages idly.

"Work, with you here?" I blurted.

If your imagination can conceive a more infinitesimal incentive to work than Billy, you should cultivate it. They pay well for that kind.

"Why, surely, the mere presence of one who loves us ought to be an inspiration."

"*Billy*," I snapped, "you're enough to try the patience of all the saints in the calendar at once! Who is coming here to meet you?"

"*Vina!* This from you?" Billy was a study in cherubic innocence.

"Yes, from *me*. If there's one thing I am not short on, it's memory."

"I don't know what you mean," he said blithely, and his childlike and bland expression gave a tinge of truth to his words. "And, honest Injun, I don't care! Lord! What a gorgeriferous morning! 'God's in His Heaven,' he caroled, "'all's right with the world, God's in His Heaven, all's right—'"

"Cut that out, Billy," I broke in sharply, on his ascending crescendo.

I liked that song once, but—all *wasn't* right, and never would be for me; but, of course, that simpleton of a Billy didn't know anything about that.

"Some people think I sing it rather well. Who was it used to sing that, Vina; remember?"

Did I remember? Wasn't every note, wasn't every word of it burned deep in my soul?

"I don't remember," I said briefly.

"It's a bully thing. By the way, Vina, guess whom I saw last night?"

"It having been New Year's Eve, I'd be ashamed to guess."

"Oh, you needn't be! Guess."

"Mrs. Travers, dancing on a table," I said spitefully.

"Wrong."

"Daisy Ellsler, in a monstrous white beaver, pelting every good-looking man with violets."

Billy shook his head.

"Margery Applegate swimming in champagne, and yelling: 'Come in, the bubbles are fine!'"

"What an indecent imagination!" Billy howled with laughter. "Nope. Guess again."

"I can't. Who?" I asked, more crossly than grammatically.

"Roger Gordon."

"Roger!" I felt myself grow white. My nails went deep into the palms of my hands. "I thought he was in Italy," I said coldly.

"Was. Got back yesterday. Asked about you. Nice fellow!"

"Don't talk like a telegram, Billy." I could hear my own voice shake.

"Oh, very well! Say, Vina, weren't you and Roger pretty good friends once upon a time?"

"Why, yes," I said, as evenly as I

could for the thumping of my heart, "pretty good. Once upon a time."

"He's a darned nice chap. That little Headly girl was crazy about him. So was Edith Day. And, between us, I always thought that that icicle of a Mrs. Van Pelt melted a bit when he was around."

"Billy, please spare me the tale of Roger's conquests."

"Well, you must admit he is attractive."

"People change. I haven't seen him in a long time."

Long? It was a lifetime.

"He's the kind of man no woman need be ashamed of. I never could see just what he saw in Marian Lambert, though—do you know when they are to be married?"

Billy stopped smoking for a minute, and looked at me steadily.

"I don't know anything about them."

"And care less?"

"And care less," I lied.

Billy sighed. "Well, I'll tell you when. Roger told me last night. He asked me to tell you—some time."

"Tell me!" I flamed.

Oh, the conceit! The egotism! And Roger like that!

"I see no reason—he need not flatter himself—I have not the slightest interest in his affairs. He is absolutely presumptuous," I stormed. "I don't ever want to hear another word about him. I forbid you ever to mention his name to me again. And if you are just trying to kill time while waiting for one of your easy friends to come here, please do it in some other way than by talking of him. I don't want—"

The bell of my workshop rang—timidly. Just as I had known it would. Just as it had on those two or three other memorable occasions. It was no surprise to me. I had known all along that this was precisely what was going to happen. Billy had not fooled me in the least. I was raging. I could have brained him for trying to play me for a fool.

I stalked to the door, trembling to think what I might say to any of the Daisy Ellslers, or Margery Applegates,

or Mrs. Traverses who should be standing there. Ten minutes before it would have been bad enough. Now I was in a mood to stop at nothing. With shaking hands, I opened the door, and saw—Roger!

I was limp. What I said I have not the faintest recollection. Nor until the judgment day shall I remember what Roger said. What we did, I know not. Whether my hand rested in his for a brief moment, or whether we merely looked into each other's eyes is, for me, forever wrapped in mystery. I only know that he came into the room, and that I closed the door behind him, and that I stood there, clinging to the knob of the door to steady myself.

And then, way far off in the distance, it seemed to me, I heard the cheerful voice of Billy say: "Hello, Roger, old man! It's great to have you around again!" And never until that minute had I wanted to fall down on my knees, and thank the Powers above for the presence of Billy. Billy the interruption! In my grateful penitence I could have thrown my arms around his neck.

And then I heard Roger say, and his voice did not seem *quite* so far away: "It's great to be around again!"

And then that cheerful, human Billy said what Billy always says to another man under all circumstances, be they tragic or comic: "Have a cigarette?" And I blessed him for it.

"If Vina doesn't mind," said Roger.

"Not at all," I said faintly.

And then I pulled myself together, and, walking over to the couch, sat down facing the two men. My mind was a chaos of warring emotions. I was furious with Roger for forcing himself upon me after all that had happened. There was no rhyme or reason for his coming save to exhibit himself in his smug, almost-wedded happiness. And yet I was conscious of a feeling of peace in the mere fact of his presence. I was raging at myself for that feeling, and yet there was no power within me strong enough to put it to rout. I had starved for a sight and a sound of him. Yet I could have slain him for coming!

And all this time he and Billy were exchanging commonplaces, chattering along like a pair of demented magpies, while I sat mute. Suddenly Billy looked at his watch and jumped up.

"Well, I guess I'll trot along, Vina."

"Billy!" I cried in dismay, finding my voice in a hurry.

Oh, he couldn't be going to leave me alone with Roger! That was the one thing on the face of the earth I desired least of all.

"Yes, I have an engagement. Good-by, Roger; good-by, Vina," coming over to the couch, and putting out his hand.

"Billy, *please* don't go."

I emphasized my appeal with a tight grip of his strong young hand.

"Oh, I must. I know you have lots of work to do." There was a wicked twinkle in Billy's eye.

"Yes, but—but—I'm not working this morning, you see," I said lamely.

"Oh, but you ought to be. Remember that new hat and fur coat!"

Never had I expected to make a meal so speedily of my own words.

"Billy, *please* be sensible." I followed him to the door. "I've—I've got such lots of things to say to you. Stay, and—and I'll cook you both a nice little luncheon before long," I finished, in desperation.

If there is one thing on earth I loathe it is cooking, but food has been known to be a short cut to Billy's heart.

"Jolly as that would be, I can't possibly."

"Billy," I whispered—we were at the door, and I was all but crying by this time—"I'll do anything in the world for you if you'll only stay. Bring Daisy, and Milly, and Margery here forty-seven times a week. I'll never say a word. Only please don't leave me now. Billy, dear, *please* stay."

"Some other day, Vina. By-by." And as he swung jauntily down the hall with the air of a man who had scored at the last, he called back triumphantly: "Just remember I *tried* to, Vina, and you wouldn't let me!"

And then I was alone with Roger. Alone with him for the first time since

that horrid, unforgettable day when we had said good-by.

I dropped into a chair near the door. The room was very still. Roger stood over by the window, oblivious of everything apparently save his cigarette and the flood of sunshine which streamed in upon him.

"Well, Roger?" I said quietly, and I marveled at my own calmness.

He turned round slowly, and faced me.

"You might say you're not sorry to see me," he reproached.

"Why should I say that?"

"Perhaps just to be civil."

"Isn't it better to be truthful?"

"Not when the truth hurts."

I was silent for a moment. Alas, there was no truth from me that could hurt Roger!

Then I said: "Why have you come here, Roger?"

"Because I wanted to see you once more."

"I can't see why. Surely there was finality enough in our last meeting," I said bitterly.

"Enough to last through two ordinary lifetimes," Roger's tone was as bitter as my own.

"Then, why not let the dead rest?"

"I don't know. Sometimes the dead are—"

"Should be made to suffer to make a holiday for the living?" I interrupted hotly, and I believe I hated Roger at that moment.

"No. Sometimes the dead are unhappy *being* dead. And then we try, we hope, we pray—"

"Roger, for Heaven's sake, try to be loyal to some one. Do you think such talk is fair to Marian?"

"Marian?"

"Yes, Marian," I said angrily.

"Didn't Billy tell you?"

"Tell me what?"

"That Marian and I—"

"Oh, yes," I said wearily. "He said you had told him when you and Marian were to be married. That you had asked him to tell me some time."

"Yes, go on."

"That's all. Then you came."

"And Billy didn't tell you—"

"When?"

"Yes, when."

"No, I wouldn't let him. What did it matter to me when? Why should you think, what right had you to think, that I cared a picayune when? Whether it was to-morrow or five years from to-morrow, what was it to me?"

"Less than nothing. I see. It's all right. I'm sorry, sorry about everything. Sorry, most of all, that I sent Billy here this morning."

"*You sent Billy!*" I gasped.

"Yes, to tell you that everything was all over. That was the when," he said roughly.

"All over?" My voice was as still and as small as the voice of conscience.

"Yes, all over. I treated Marian like a dog, but I couldn't help it. I had made one ghastly mistake, and I couldn't make another, no matter whom or what I sacrificed. There had never been any one but you. There never could be. That I found it out too late is my punishment. I thought, perhaps—perhaps—I had no right to, but—" His voice trembled.

"Roger," I said faintly, "there isn't any—too late!"

And the next instant I was in his arms, crying as if my heart would break.

An hour later I called up Billy, dear, cheerful, human, blundering, interrupting, and being interrupted, Billy, and if central were listening, she must have thought me fit for the psychopathic ward.

"Hello, Billy. This is Malvina. Billy, listen, listen hard." And at the top of my lungs I sang:

"God's in His Heaven,
All's right with the world;
God's in His Heaven,
All's right with the world!"

"Good-by."

"What on earth—" began Roger.

"Something you're much too young to know," I laughed happily.

And that afternoon I sent Billy a dozen glorious, long-stemmed American Beauties.

IN MUSICLAND

By William J. Armstrong

WHAT manner of man is Giacomo Puccini? Those who have seen him pass before the curtain in response to calls on nights when his operas were given at the Metropolitan likely retain first an impression of his personality. His height and powerful build may bear a share in this, but secondary. He is restrained in movement, coming thus suddenly into publicity; he is grave, calm through self-command, and evidently glad to withdraw instantly from sight.

At such times the impressionistic portrait of him is that of a strong, pale face, almost heavy in the immobility of nervousness; large, dark eyes, vitally alight from the brain back of them; a broad, high forehead, and thick hair, in these latter years plentifully streaked with gray. Distinguished he is, and dignified, with a degree of ease of movement which, with the Latin, no situation can quite destroy.

But it is something behind the materially visual that makes itself felt penetratingly, and lingers—his personality, which, last as well as first, in this casual glimpse of him, is conveyed convincingly.

He is, in fact, away from the officialdom his art enforces, frankly boyish, yet with a strain of inborn, simple dignity; those thrown into close contact with him are never likely to forget the royalty of his talent or its due.

Since 1712 the Puccinis have been musicians; he is the result of that evolution, and he accepts it as naturally as it was obtained. When he was eight he began to study music because his father was a *kapellmeister*; a little later he entered active service as church organist; at seventeen he composed a mass; at twenty-five he had written his first opera, "Le Villi." Each step in the evolution had come as naturally as did that of his birthright.

After he has written an opera, it passes from his mind; it scarcely occurs to him to play even some fragment from it. When his "Manon Lescaut" was brought out in Paris last summer by the Metropolitan singers, he frankly said that not having heard or returned to it in eight years, it interested him as a new opera.

At Torre del Lago, his home in Tuscany, Puccini, with a libretto at last in hand, the most difficult of things for him to find in point of absolute fitness, composes in the quiet hours of the night; from ten to three he forges ahead, dots and dashes growing on the leaves before him, and in concentrated oblivion. But next morning, if he feels the inspiration still upon him, he has to begin writing in pajamas. "For," he guiltily confesses, "if I dressed I should be off to the country." The call of outdoor life is to him the one thing almost too difficult to stifle.

Fishing, hunting, the motor boat, and

car are equal attractions to Puccini; his physical alertness, endurance, and camaraderie make him a man's man, in thorough sympathy with his times. That physical alertness in his life is reflected in his scores; it shows alongside his keen insight into the dramatic value of moving subjects.

Tactfully silent on impressions of public functions which his celebrity entails, he returns with zest to a simple, congenial group which has persistently refused acquaintance with formality. Yet, with Puccini adaptability is complete; in the one situation as in the other it is absolute simplicity that makes him one with it. To an observer, however, the clear impression is that in public life he stands instinctively above surrounding elements, not as a pose or attitude of mind, but through a realization, which with him it would be trivial hypocrisy to disguise. In the common intercourse of life, though, he refuses to distinguish between the man who has done much or less; if one proves sympathetic he is a comrade on equal grounds. Puccini's art makes the major part of his being and interest, but all that leaves the human side of him completely undisturbed.

Nonsense verses are a delight to him; with some near friends he corresponds in them; with his intimates he cannot spare a pun even in signing an autograph photograph.

Ask him questions about his art, and you arouse a curious set intensity entirely at variance with that other self of his, which appears so readily to fall into the groove of those about him. You touch, as it were, a procession of people so real in his mind that those in actuality are misty things beside them, demanding quite another kind of thought. His own assertion in reviewing them is that antipathetic as *Scarpia* may seem, or as coldly calculating under his polish as the *Sheriff*—a rôle in "The Girl of the Golden West," of which he is very fond—he falls completely into the character. Sometimes a gentle figure like that of *Mimi*, in "Bohème," he went on to say, carries him farther away still; the irresistible

attraction deepens into love, and that, too, shows as freely in his music.

He is as a novelist in whose imagination figures spring up realistically, their creation bringing a new circle into his life to make the more engrossing part of it. But with the sense of contrast so necessary between leading characters in a forceful drama, he passes on to each with a sympathy that lets him sink himself in their emotions. "I feel with one as with the other," is his declaration.

The finding of a plot Puccini pronounces the hardest part of a composer's task.

"But once I discover one, I recognize it instantly. The first seeing of 'The Girl of the Golden West,' for instance, irrevocably fixed my decision to use it for an opera. As to the selection of subjects for the opera of the future in all countries, I can see only one outlook; they will not be placed in the time in which the composer lives. Present dress is without poetry in its suggestion; the illusion must be sustained to allow that atmosphere of poetry inalienable from any opera. We must always go back, even if a little way, to secure it; we shall not find it with those in whom we are in contact every day."

Puccini has the qualities that go to make an actor; his fancy and imagination have the power not only to suggest things to him tremendously, but enable him to portray them with convincing realism to others. In speaking of his sensations while at work upon an opera, he says it is not alone the music that he hears: "I see as from a window the scene and characters; they are living there before me."

The words had conjured up a picture so intense of his own feelings that he conveyed in face, attitude, and gesture their overwhelmingness. It was not merely evidence of that eloquence common to all Italians, but ability to illustrate emotions with uncanny forcefulness that impressed indelibly.

Puccini is distinctly dual, as all great creative people must be. On the one side he has pronouncedly developed

traits and qualities that would go to make a man misunderstood by the average; on the other, he is readily able to be one with the life lived about him. From the majority of this dual type he differs; if in his work the former aspect dominates him; away from it it falls into abeyance. That which strengthens his powers of the resistance of the artistic side in daily life, is expressed in his own words: "When an opera is done, I cast it from mind—it is over."

The composer is the most seriously handicapped of all musicians in his wanderings; home means a barricade which shuts in the world that he creates. No matter how narrow its walls, or what honors he may find outside them, he hurries back to take up again what to him means really living. Of Engelbert Humperdinck this is particularly true; in some respects he notably resembles Grieg; there is the same shrinking, introspective spirit of the idealist, the same aloofness from any desire for display or recognition that distinguished Grieg; but Grieg, for all his physical frailty, had a willingness to hold his own in contention, which to Humperdinck would bring only bewilderment.

With his gentle fancy, his honesty, and the ideals which he holds fast in childlike steadfastness, he has little in common with a busy world that is always trying, yet never fully able, to forget all trace of things very like to those same ideals of his.

Among opera composers of the present, Humperdinck may be called the conscience; in "Königskinder" he has voiced a theme of simple, high sincerity that none of them in our generation has dared touch.

His libretto is selected because it appeals to him sympathetically, and without any thought of how it may appeal to others; in that he differs from his contemporaries, who diagnose the public taste as a doctor would his patient's malady, and then prescribe accordingly. To know him is to feel that no such thing as striving for popularity has ever touched his mind; his is the old spirit

of German art before a rage for materialism, crasser than in any city in the world, seized on Berlin.

Away from his home near the forest of Grünwald and in the crushing speed that to-day means life, he is as a child thrust from a quiet, flowery garden into the hoof-beaten, mass-clogged highway.

It is no wonder that to New York interviewers he seemed monosyllabic; he and superficiality are strangers; the hundred nothings that spring readily to many lips would never come to his. Guilmant, the great French organist, voiced the same spirit when, on landing, he was tritely asked how he liked America, and naïvely answered: "I haven't seen it yet."

Humperdinck, however, does not take himself seriously at all; his humor—and he has a sense of humor so quietly delicious that Twain would have found joy in it—is mainly leveled at himself. To the question, "Did you always want to be a composer?" he retorted quickly: "Yes. At first I thought I should be a second Beethoven; presently I found that to be another Schubert would be good; later, I would have been content to be a Lortzing—then, gradually satisfied with less and less, I was resigned to be a Humperdinck."

In writing music to plays, as to librettos, it is sympathy that dictates his choice. For Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice," "Winter's Tale," "The Tempest," and "Twelfth Night," and for Maeterlinck's "Blue Bird," he has composed underlying scores, in instances as elaborately supporting monologue as if treated in opera; where a more material mind would have spent the same time and work upon operas, he strove to show his reverence for the things he loved. "But," he added, smiling quietly, "'Midsummer Night's Dream' is not in my list; that I left to a certain Mendelssohn."

By his undertaking in this direction he has proved, though, a theory held perhaps by many thoughtful people, that Shakespeare, not merely with incidental music, but with music illuminating lengthy speeches out of keeping with

the brevity in stage writing of to-day, would attain new hold on life. At the Deutsches Theatre in Berlin Shakespeare, with Humperdinck's orchestral settings, stands high in popular demand.

Humperdinck's plan of writing is characteristic; the inspiration is there or he is idle, but when it comes he knows no limit to work, though he must be at home, in the midst of familiar surroundings, of which a forest is prime part, to be able to write at all.

A type of musician away from home environment loses, as it were, half the individual power that he should carry. The accustomed setting of his daily life has become a part of him; unconscious freedom, if he is to have it, is found only there. Even operatic artists, used as they must be to any stage setting, lose appreciably, though less than others in this aspect; for home, to the artist, is the one spot where he is completely, thoroughly himself; there even the personality that carries across the footlights strongly becomes stronger still.

And so it is that at Grünwald or at his summer home on the Rhine, Humperdinck only really finds himself, away from that outside world of which he can never be a part, for Humperdinck will go through life not knowing how it is, but how it should be lived. Unpractical he may be in many directions, but not in his composition, which absorbs him with exactness to the point that when an opera passes from his hands at dress rehearsal—to Humperdinck the climax of nervous anxiety—he has no qualms left for the première or its reception. He has done his utmost, it must stand for itself.

At Munich, when "*Hänsel und Gretel*" was given its first hearing there, he was seated in a café with his wife and friends of theirs, so pleasantly occupied that he quite forgot his opera, opportunely remembered by one among them in time to save its composer from missing the first act.

Ready he seems always to give a good word to less known, slowly rising colleagues, but ask him, as I did, a direct question about the next opera

of his own in mind, and you would likely get somewhat the same answer: "If you will be responsible for it, I will write one."

No running chronicle of this season would be complete without mention of Andreeff, and his musical services to Russia. When he took up his study of the balalaika it had fallen into contempt; by development he has elevated it to its proper place as the distinctively national instrument of his country. It has required Andreeff's fortune and life labor to accomplish this, but with accomplishment he has placed himself among the immortals of Russia.

In German there is a saying, "A bad man has no song." Recalling this, Andreeff values first not American appreciation of his balalaika orchestra, but American appreciation of the Russian melodies it plays.

"For, as a people," is his summary, "we have been judged and misjudged, but if our melodies speak so strongly to your sympathies, it should help a little to prove that we cannot be so bad a folk as we are sometimes pictured."

The balalaika, as Andreeff first found it played by a wandering peasant, was an insignificant affair of three strings, triangular in shape, and costing a few kopecks. Instantly its resource in rhythm struck him, and, after a study, he concluded it capable of all music. But as it now stands, perfected by his ingenuity, it is to the purely Russian that it must be regarded as best suited, voicing the national song in characteristic fashion. The St. Petersburg instrument maker to whom he took the humble original to build a better copy, at first refused, then consented, on agreement that the undertaking, so far below his dignity, be held a secret.

"But I saw its resources," Andreeff continued, no ray of humorous recollection lighting his earnestness, "and began to study its proportions, supplying frets, lacking in the original, and finally, from slowly developed plans, making models for a quartette, where, in the old style, it had been possible only to play in unison."

This quartette made the foundation of his present orchestra.

Trained as violinist and pianist, and strongly musical, Andreeff developed the balalaika technique; everywhere when opportunity came he played it publicly, arousing attention. But always there was the derision of builders to contend against; good instruments were never forthcoming. By them the balalaika was not taken seriously; it was as if a noted piano maker had been asked to build a sublimated jew's-harp. They looked upon him as a mild maniac, or, at best, eccentric.

After years of this vain struggle to realize plans properly, a veteran master builder, thrown by chance in his way, entered upon the work with ardor. Andreeff took him to his estate; for fifteen years they toiled together experimenting in endeavors to do better. When success came Andreeff refused all prospect of monopoly. "I want," he said, "only to be of service to my country," giving all models free to any who would bind themselves to exactness in a reproduction. To-day the annual output in Russia is two hundred thousand instruments, and the revenue from it seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Only medicine has given instances of such splendid unselfishness in research.

The perfected instrument was but a first step; beyond, lay the vital undertaking of its general introduction. The Musical Society of St. Petersburg obtained for him the czar's permission to teach it to the soldiers, who, their term of military service ended, would take the balalaika home with them to widely scattered villages. For twelve hours daily for six years, Andreeff gave his services as teacher, going from one barracks to another, finding his self-imposed task the easier because of the natural talent and willingness of his pupils. Andreeff did not speak of success, but finally showed results. With an orchestra of a hundred experts, selected from barracks where he could pick double and treble that number, he gave a concert before the czar, who, grasping the importance of a national instrument

for every people, gave funds to engage sixteen teachers to carry on the work which Andreeff had done alone.

In its practical aspect he regards the balalaika as supplying a need not otherwise to be met. In his opinion: "Most men have some lurking love for music. The one has no voice, the other no means for lessons on an instrument. The balalaika presents no great obstacle as to cost; it is the easiest instrument to master. Give me sixteen people, and in one hour and a half daily for a week I can teach them to play six or eight pieces."

While the balalaika must remain peculiarly Russian in results and characteristics, Andreeff has practically introduced it in other lands; in London, as an instance, he has founded sixteen balalaika orchestras; one, of twenty-five men in the Coldstream Guards, after two months' study, is fulfilling regular engagements in public concerts.

In Russia now there is no village without its balalaika band; peasant families in their homes play it together; in St. Petersburg, among other balalaika orchestras is one made up of children, with an eleven-year-old boy as conductor.

"And it is the old music of Russia that they play everywhere," is Andreeff's self-congratulation. "The old music that is so far better and more heartfelt than the trivial, popular things once threatening to swamp us from the West."

His artistic journeys have carried him through his own country, Germany, and England, and latterly to America, with everywhere the same enthusiasm from genuine musicians. But everywhere, as in Russia, where he might have recouped himself and become beyond that many times a millionaire, he has said simply: "It is not the dollar, but the idea for which I am striving." Few lives in music have shown such single aim, fewer have illustrated so fully the splendid victories of which devotion to art in the national aspect is so richly capable.

The afternoon he spoke to me of the work to which he has given his life, his

orchestra was assisting in a program. From time to time he left me in his dressing room to go before the public, returning to take up a sentence in halting German where he had left it off. More than once he had to be reminded that the audience was calling for an encore. The theme to him had been too absorbing to give thought to such

a trivial matter as momentary commendation.

Now, it is the one idea that holds him; the balalaika is his end and his beginning of all things. The result has been a nation's appreciation; Russia has its national instrument in perfection, and its national melodies conserved in that instrument for all time.



BREATH OF APRIL

BREATH of April, when earth's rapture
Shakes the hills at your command,
And your old, immortal promise
Thrills of the gardens of the land,

Let my tear-swept heart be ready
For the joy that wildly wakes,
When in every lane and orchard
All the ancient wonder breaks.

When the morning, like a primrose,
Bursts to sudden flaming flower;
And the hawthorn hedges whiten
In the fragrant twilight hour,

When the shining hills stand verdant,
Like green warders of the world,
And from every tree your banners
Jubilantly are unfurled;

Then, oh, then, in pity take me
From pale Winter's sheath and shroud,
And make all my burdens lighter
Than the farthest fleecy cloud;

Make the shadows that engulf me
Vanish swiftly as a dream;
Give me of your flowery knowledge,
Teach me your wild pagan theme;

Wrap me round with your mad music,
Drench me in your cleansing rain,
And erase my childish errors,
All the clinging dust and stain.

Breath of April, breathe your healing,
Make me ready in that hour
When the world's sad heart you quicken
With the Spring's first fragile flower.

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.



AFTER Jim York had put in the shot, he went back the short distance to the mouth of the tunnel, glancing, as he passed, at the box of giant powder which he had left inside the entrance. As he came out into the sunlight, he looked across the wide gulch at the cabin perched high up on the opposite side.

"The box of giant will be safe enough where it is for now," he said, aloud, as men will when they are talking to themselves in the solitudes. "I'll go home and see the little girl, and have something to eat first," he added, "and come back this afternoon and stow the giant in a safe place. Then I will fire the shot and see what comes of it. Something must show up soon. It must!" York's face contracted as he spoke. "From the way Morland wrote," he went on, "I will have a month yet before he comes out. The rock that I am in now is looking better. A month is a long time. There is a chance yet—to make good."

He turned, and, making his way down the steep, rock-scarred slope to the bottom of the gulch, crossed the boisterous creek on a fallen log, climbed up the opposite slope to the cabin, and opened the door. The harassed look left his face as he did so.

"Oh, Jim!" cried a happy, welcoming voice. "I am so glad that you have come. I did not expect you till late this afternoon. I had not even begun to look down the gulch for you yet."

"I made a quick trip, Mary," he answered, kissing her. "I would have been here even sooner, but, after I had sent Indian Tom back with the broncho, I

stopped at the mine long enough to put in a shot."

"Jim, you look tired," said his wife, holding him off at arm's length. "Did you have a hard trip?"

"Yes, freighting giant powder up the gulch from Gold Star Camp on a broncho, with the chance of his stumbling among the rocks, is rather anxious business."

"Of course it is, dear. It is awful to think what might happen. I cannot bear to have you do it," she returned, with a shudder. "It makes me dreadfully afraid. Why must you? You have made your report to the West Peak Company people. Why can't you let the mine stand as it is until Mr. Morland comes out? Why must you keep on working?"

"Oh, I want to make—as good a showing as I can," he answered, trying to speak carelessly, but the words choked him.

"Of course you do, dear," she returned proudly. "That is always your way. And now you are to sit right down in this chair close to the kitchen door," she went on, bustling happily about the room, "and not do a thing except watch me cook. You must be awfully hungry."

His eyes followed her as she stepped lightly here and there about the rough cabin.

"Mary," he said, "you are like a wild flower. No matter how ugly a crevice it is growing in, it is the prettiest thing ever."

His wife's face flushed with pleasure. "Jim, you are a dear!" she laughed. "But this cabin isn't an ugly

crevice, sir," she went on, making a little face at him. "It is very nice and cozy, I think—and we are together, and that is the best of all." She gave his hand a quick squeeze as she passed his chair. "I love you so," she half whispered.

"You don't mind roughing it? You don't miss the city—and all that?" he asked.

She shook her head. "Not with you. You are my city, Jim. You are my—everything."

"Mary, do you love me enough to—to stand anything that might happen?" he asked a little huskily.

"Jim, what do you mean? Yes; I do, no matter what," she added quickly, putting her arm impulsively around his neck. "But what do you mean?"

"Nothing at all," he answered, getting up. "I am off for a pail of water."

"But you were to sit still," she reminded him, "and not do anything."

"This isn't anything," he laughed, taking up the pail.

As he left the cabin, his face changed.

"How can I ever tell her?" he muttered. "She will not believe it, at first. And then—when she does—when she looks at me and knows—God, how can I tell her! She loves me—she believes in me. The shame of it will break her heart! But I have a month yet," he added doggedly. "Perhaps I can make good. Perhaps—"

His ankle turned suddenly on a loose stone, and he pitched forward on the steep trail. He picked himself up, and found his pail. Sharp pains were darting up his leg.

"It isn't anything," he muttered, gritting his teeth, as he limped down to the spring and filled the pail. "It isn't anything," he muttered again, as he started back to the cabin. "I can't afford to be laid up now. It will be all right in a minute," he added doggedly.

By the time he had reached the cabin he could feel his ankle swelling in his boot, and the pain of taking a step turned him faint.

"Jim! What is the matter?" exclaimed his wife as he set down the pail. "You are as white as a sheet!"

"Nothing—nothing at all," he answered, almost fiercely. "I stepped on a confounded stone and turned my ankle. It will be all right as soon as I get my boot off."

The boot had to be cut off. It was a bad sprain. York, lying on the bunk, looked grimly at the distorted, swollen ankle.

"Is it very painful, dear?" asked Mary, applying the liniment with gentle hand.

"No; rub harder. You must get it in shape so that I can go to work. I have a shot in all ready to fire. I can wear a slipper."

"Why, Jim, dear," she remonstrated, "it will be impossible for you to use your foot for days."

"I must," he returned doggedly. "I cannot be laid up now. I must use it. Let me try."

Sitting up, he put his foot to the floor and bore his weight on it. Then he sank back dizzy with pain, clutching the bunk.

"I can't stand," he moaned. "Now of all times. I can't stand. I can't work! When every day means—By Heaven!" he exclaimed fiercely. "I must, I will!"

Suddenly he regained command of himself and stopped, pale to the lips.

"I—I do not understand, Jim," faltered his wife. "What is it?"

"Nothing, Mary," he returned, trying to laugh. "I guess the pain has frazzled my nerves. Hello, I hear a dog barking," he went on in an effort to relieve the situation. "Some one is coming. See who it is, Mary."

She opened the door and looked down the gulch. Then she closed it quickly.

"It is that Grad Mullen, Jim."

York started. His lips tightened.

"I wish you did not need to have business with him, Jim. I loathe him," she added, with a gesture of aversion. "He is so—so puffy and venomous-looking, like an ugly toad—ugh!"

"We can't always choose whom we do business with," returned York shortly.

"Of course not," put in his wife quickly. "Excuse me, Jim. I ought not to meddle. Just let me put this cool

bandage all comfy around your ankle—so. And now I will go into the kitchen, and shut the door and let you talk, because I do not like him a bit, Jim—so there!" She laughed with a little grimace. "If you want me for anything, or if your ankle pains too much, call out," she added solicitously as she left the room.

York lay on the bunk staring gloomily at the door.

"What brings Mullen up here?" he muttered. "He doesn't like exercise. It can't be that—"

There was a step outside and a knock at the door.

"Come in," called York.

The door opened, and a short, stout man, with an unhealthy puffiness under his quick, little eyes, entered the room.

"Howdy, Jim?" he said.

"How are you, Mullen?"

"Done up," panted Mullen, sinking heavily into a chair. "It's a hot number, this 'ere gulch, when you ain't used to climbing," he added, wiping his flabby face.

York nodded.

"What's the matter, Jim? Hurt your foot?"

"Sprained my ankle," returned York.

"So bad you can't walk on it?"

York nodded.

"Maybe it's just as well," commented Mullen, with a furtive look at York. "Perhaps you just as soon not show old Morland around the mine."

"Morland!" echoed York.

"Yes, that's what has brought me up here so fast. Him and some of the West Peak people—and a couple of them experts is down at Gold Star. Just got in—unexpected like."

York stared straight before him.

"They are coming up here, some of them, this afternoon, to examine the property with you," went on Mullen. "On their way by now, likely. I didn't wait for them," he added, with a significant laugh.

York said nothing, but his fingers were pressed hard against the side of the bunk.

"I just stopped in to let you know how things was," said Mullen, after a

moment. "I am going to keep on up the gulch a piece and cross over to Rock Creek. I've got business at Riley's Camp that will keep me—for a few days."

York nodded impassively.

"Now look a-here, Jim," went on Mullen, with a shifty glance around the cabin. "I reckon the jig is up when them experts gets to examining around the tunnel, but that ain't no funeral of mine. I carried out my bargain with you. Ain't that correct?"

York nodded again.

"Well, then, your play is to stand pat—and not ring me in on no trouble. I didn't make no representations, mind you. And they can't prove nothing on you, either," he went on smoothly. "It was just your opinion, and the vein was looking mighty well for a while."

York's face reddened dullly through the tan.

"What more have you got to say, Mullen?" he asked. "I—I am tired."

"Now look a-here, Jim, you ain't a-going to ring me in for trouble, after all I done for you, are you?" put in Mullen, in a half-blustering, half-cringing tone.

"No," returned York fiercely, "I am not. You may go to the devil your own way. I accepted your terms—well, you know why," he went on hoarsely. "I carried out the bargain, and you paid me, and that is all there is to it. And now, if you haven't anything more to say, I am tired."

"Sure, Jim, sure," said Mullen, in a relieved tone. "I knew you was white and would stand by the deal. So-long. Maybe them experts ain't so much. Like enough you could fool 'em—if only you was in shape to show 'em around the workings," he added, glancing at the swollen foot.

York turned upon him like a tortured animal.

"Get out, Mullen," he said hoarsely. "I tell you that—"

"Sure, Jim, sure," returned Mullen, shrinking back. "No offense, I hope," he added, as he went out and closed the door softly behind him.

York turned restlessly on the bunk, and looked through the window with

somber eyes at the mouth of the tunnel that showed dark against the opposite slope.

"It is as black as the pit of hell," he muttered. "It is the pit of hell to me. My reputation is buried in it."

He started nervously as the kitchen door opened and his wife came in.

"I thought that he never would go, Jim," she said. "I couldn't hear what he was talking about, but I hate even the sound of his voice. It is so oily. There, I promise never even to mention him again," she laughed, throwing open the door. "I will let the sun-shine in and forget him. How is your ankle, dear?"

"I don't know. I have not thought of it. Mary, please come here."

She walked over and stood at the side of the bunk.

"Tell me that you love me, Mary," he said passionately.

"I love you, Jim, with all my soul," she said, bending to him with a quick gesture.

"Mary, sit down beside me. I must tell you something—before you hear it some other way."

"Yes, dear."

"It is an ugly story, and the finish is to-day."

"Jim, what do you mean?"

"You remember, a few months ago, when you were ill, so ill that I was nearly mad with the fear that you—"

She gave a little, shuddering sigh, and nestled her hand in his.

"Yes," she said, "and you borrowed the money, a lot of it, and took me to San Francisco to the specialist and—"

"I didn't borrow the money."

"Why, Jim, I thought you told me—"

"I lied to you!"

Her hand trembled in his.

"I tried to borrow it," he went on desperately. "I couldn't. I had to have it at once. My God, I had to have it! At last I went to Grad Mullen."

"Grad Mullen!"

"Yes, and tried to get it from him. He said that he would let me have it, would give me a thousand dollars—"

"Grad Mullen!" she broke in. "How I have misjudged him! But—"

"If I would report favorably on his mine over there!" cried York, pointing a shaking finger at the tunnel across the gulch.

"Yes," she breathed.

"I did it," he went on heavily. "Upon the faith of my report, the West Peak people paid Mullen five thousand dollars for an option on the mine. I got a thousand of it."

Her hand fluttered piteously in his.

"But the mine—it is all right, isn't it?" she half whispered.

"No; it is worthless."

"But, Jim, you didn't know it! You thought—" Her voice was pleading, tremulous.

He shook his head.

"I reported what the ore assayed, but I did not report that the vein was pinching out—and I knew it."

"Oh, Jim!"

"Don't blame me too much. You were dying before my eyes! I was mad with terror of what was coming! I hoped that the vein would widen out again. I made myself believe that it would. I gambled on it. That is why I have worked so hard. I have lost! Every stroke of work that I have done has made it worse. The vein has pinched to almost nothing. Morland and his experts are at Gold Star. They will be here this afternoon. Mullen told me."

His wife's hand tightened convulsively in his.

"I thought that I had another month to work," he hurried on. "I did not expect them yet. There was a chance that any day might show up something. The shot I have in now, all ready to fire, might uncover a rich lead. And here I am on my back, helpless, and Morland is on his way up the gulch! That is the whole wretched story, Mary. Your husband is a—"

"Jim! Stop! You are not!" she cried, throwing her arms about him as if to fend off some dreadful thing. "You did it all for me! I was the cause of it! God will never let you suffer for that. He will help you in some way."

York shook his head.

"Oh, yes, I know that it was wrong," she rushed on, "but you did not do it for the money! You did it for me! You gave—everything for me. Oh, Jim, my Jim," she sobbed, clinging to him, "I would not have let you do it if I had known, but I love you for it," she cried wildly. "I love you for it!"

"Mary—" He choked. "I thought—"

"Something will happen to help us, Jim!"

"Then it must happen soon," he said quietly. "Look!" he added, pointing through the open door at figures moving among the rocks away down the gulch. "They are coming! Coming now!"

His wife gazed with desperate eyes, clasping and unclasping her hands.

"There must be some way—some way," she murmured, turning here and there about the cabin like a hunted thing.

Suddenly she glanced across the gulch at the tunnel, and stood still, a new light in her eyes.

"Jim!" she exclaimed. "You told me that you had a shot in all ready to fire, and that it might mean everything."

He nodded dully.

"I will fire it!"

"No, Mary, no!" he cried. "The danger—"

"There is no danger! I know just how to do it. You remember the day I went with you and watched—"

"No, Mary! You must not—"

"Think, Jim," she panted. "Think what that one shot may mean—for both of us. They are coming nearer! There is not a moment to lose! I must! I will!"

Springing forward, she ran through the open door, and closed it against his entreaties.

York gazed helplessly through the window at her figure flying down the slope.

The box of giant powder! York's heart stopped beating for a moment. Then he madly dashed out the pane with his fist.

"Mary!" he shrieked. "The giant powder! The box of giant powder in

the tunnel! The shot will set it off! Take it away! Take it away!"

His wife paused for a moment and turned, her loosened hair blowing about her face.

"I hear you, Jim," she called. "The giant powder! I know!"

Then she dashed on again.

"My God!" exclaimed York wildly. "Does she understand?"

He cried out again, but she did not turn.

He watched her in an agony as she swiftly crossed the gulch, and clambered up to the tunnel, and disappeared.

He waited tensely.

"Why doesn't she bring out the box?" he muttered. "My God! She does not know that it is there! She has passed it in the dark! She did not understand! She will wait near the tunnel, just as she has seen me do, while the shot goes off—and be buried by the explosion!"

He shrieked impotently at the figures down the gulch—they were coming nearer now, to stop her, to save her! Then he realized that they could not hear him at that distance through the noise of the creek that foamed along beside them.

He sprang from the bunk and leaped desperately across the cabin, but his tortured ankle gave way, and he fell forward heavily against the closed door. His weight burst it open, and he went down headlong across the threshold.

He raised his head dizzily and gazed at the tunnel. Suddenly his wife appeared at the entrance without the box! He tried to cry out. Then he saw her running recklessly down the steep slope. He raised himself up, shouting and gesticulating. Could she get far enough away? He watched her in an agony of fear. Now she had reached the bottom of the gulch, and was racing across the fallen log that bridged the creek.

Suddenly there came a dull, menacing roar! Then a great section of the rock about the tunnel, rent away from the slope, fell outward, and crumbled in a grinding mass toward the bottom of the gulch. As in a moving picture, York saw the flying figure of his wife and the

confused huddling together of the group down near the creek.

"Thank God she is safe!" he cried, burying his face in his hands.

"Jim!" exclaimed a voice at his side. "What are you doing here?"

"Mary! The box of giant powder!" he said brokenly. "I tried to make you understand—so you would not pass it in the dark—so that you—"

"I did not pass it," she panted breathlessly. "I took it with me."

"Took it with you!"

"Yes, and put it right over the shot. Oh, Jim," she cried hysterically, "I am what you called yourself! I blew up the mine on purpose, so that they could not examine the tunnel and tell that you— She was sobbing in his arms.

"Mary!" he choked.

"Look!" she cried, pointing.

The group down the gulch had run forward, and clambered up over the mass of débris. They were examining the face of the rock behind, which had been exposed by the explosion.

"Oh, Jim!" she wailed. "Instead of covering it up, I have uncovered it."

"Yes, Mary," answered York, "and it is best so. Nature will bear witness now for—or against me."

"See!" she exclaimed. "They have finished. They are coming this way."

"Help me, Mary. Let us go back into the cabin."

York's face was gray. He limped back to the bunk, leaning heavily upon her. She closed the door, and they waited mutely until they heard voices and a knock at the door.

"Come in," called York. Mary gripped his hand hard.

The door opened, and a middle-aged, keen-eyed man entered, followed by two younger men.

"How do you do, Mr. Morland?" began York.

"Hello, York!" cut in Morland abruptly. "You are safe, then. I was afraid when things went to pieces a few moments ago that you might have got caught. How do you do, Mrs. York? Let me present Mr. Fanning and Mr. James, mining experts from New York.

What happened, York?" he went on. "Were you trying to blow the Rockies off the map?"

"Oh, Mr. Morland, it was all my fault," put in Mary quickly. "Jim sprained his ankle. I offered to fire the shot. There was a box of giant powder in the tunnel that—"

"That I very carelessly left there," cut in York, "expecting to go back myself and stow it away before—"

"I see," nodded Morland. "Well," he added in another tone, "since no one has been killed, we can get down to business."

Mary came quietly over and stood by the bunk at her husband's side.

Mr. Morland took a paper from his pocket.

"This is your report, York," he added, opening it.

York sat, without a word, staring at the bandaged ankle which was stretched out stiffly on the bunk before him.

"Of course, the workings are all blown to smithereens," went on Mr. Morland, "but the explosion has exposed a big face of new rock in a line with the tunnel, and it is plain, my experts say," he added deliberately, "that it does not correspond with your report." He paused.

York waited tensely for the words that would condemn him. He could hear his wife's quick breathing.

"It does not correspond, because," almost shouted Mr. Morland, "the vein is twice as wide as you reported, York, and the free gold is sticking out of the rock like currants in a cake!"

"Jim! Oh, Jim!" cried Mary. Her lips were trembling with sudden joy. "It has come out all right!"

"Yes," laughed Mr. Morland, turning to her, "that unpremeditated stunt of yours was just the thing, Mrs. York. A bit too spectacular for general use, perhaps, but you boosted your husband's report with a vengeance; didn't she, York?"

"Yes," he said huskily, as he turned on the bunk and groped blindly for his wife's hand, "she did. She made good—for both of us."



The Turn Scale

BY OWEN OLIVER

 WAS young Anson's guardian for eighteen months. Now he is four years past tutelage, but he still favors me with a good deal of his company. He called the other afternoon, dropped into a chair, and helped himself to a cigar.

"I don't often take advice," he began, in his lordly way.

"Then spare my old breath," I said tartly.

"But when I do," he continued, "it's yours. You are a man of the world, and—"

I waved compliments aside.

"What is it?" I inquired.

"I am in a curious difficulty."

"umph!" I growled. "Money?"

"No."

I might have known that. He is prudent in financial matters; too prudent for a young man.

"Then who is she?" I demanded. I always go to the point.

"There are two of her," he explained, with an apologetic grin.

"Do you want to marry one, or neither?" I inquired.

"In a way," he said, "I want to marry both." I shrugged my shoulders. "I don't mean that exactly. I'd be content to marry either, but I can't make up my mind which one."

"Neither," I advised.

"Of course," he admitted, "you think that a fellow can't be in love with two girls. I should have said so myself, but—well, why not? You may be fond of—say, two dogs—and not be able to say which you like best. That doesn't prove that you aren't fond of them both. Why not two women?"

"Because women aren't dogs!"

"That's no argument, if you'll excuse me for contradicting you. I contend that—but it isn't a question of argument. It's a fact. I'd marry either—if she'd have me—if I didn't know the other."

"You're a young fool," I told him. "However, as you say, it's no use arguing about facts. There are two girls; and you think that you are in love with both of them. I gather that you think that you could persuade either to marry you. Who are the girls?"

"Grace Marrable and Nora O'Brien. You see, they're both such nice girls."

"Yes," I assented. "They are both nice girls."

"Even you will find it hard to say which is the nicer."

"Yes," I agreed, "but I should not find it hard to say which I like best."

"Which?" he inquired.

"That's my affair. You must make your own comparison."

"They are so different that it's difficult to compare them," he apologized.

"If you compare a woman with any other," I said, "you'd better not marry her. I should wait for number three if I were you."

"I'd never seen any other girl fit to hold a candle to either of them," he stated, "and I don't believe I ever shall. Grace is such a sensible, clever girl; and not a bit conceited about it; and reasonable and kind. And Nora is such a taking little creature; and not nearly so foolish as she makes out. If you could add them up into one— As you can't, I don't mean to lose both, if one of them will have me. I don't know that she would, of course."

"There's an obvious way of deter-

mining the point. They might both say 'no'!"

"On the other hand, they might both say 'yes.' At any rate, the first one I asked might. The difficulty is which to ask first."

"Neither," I repeated.

"Oh! But I'm going to ask *one*, anyhow."

"Well," I said, "it's your affair, not mine."

"That isn't much help."

"How the deuce am I to help you?" I demanded testily. "I can't insure a fool against folly! If you've made up your mind that it's to be one, you'd better toss up."

"That's absurd! Since I like both equally I may as well choose upon some rational ground. The question is: What is the most rational reason for marrying?"

"You'd better draw up a schedule of feminine virtues," I suggested sarcastically. "So many marks apiece for looks, good temper, sewing, cooking, et cetera. Deductions for piano playing, jabbering, and the other minor vices. They haven't any major vices, so far as I've observed."

"If you're only going to make game of me," he protested, "it's no use discussing it."

"It isn't," I agreed. "The question is ridiculous."

"Ridiculous or not," he said, "it is the question. I can't make up my mind between them. As for your schedule, if it were possible to weigh up women like that—and you know it isn't; they aren't the same for two minutes running—I believe the scales would balance."

"Then you'd better wait for a turn scale," I told him. "One might break her neck, or get engaged to some one else, or have a legacy. That would settle the business, I suppose."

"Yes," he agreed. "I shouldn't like doing it for money. I wouldn't do it solely for that, of course; but since I like the girls, money would be as good a reason for choice as any other, I suppose. I'm pretty careful, and—money sticks."

I leaned forward, and wagged my finger at him.

"Money sticks," I said, "and so does a wife! If you want advice, take that! In other words, don't marry anybody unless you are so far gone that you can't help yourself. There's no other excuse."

"But I *am* 'far gone,'" he asserted.

"On both of them!" I shrugged my shoulders despairingly.

"On both of them," he repeated. "It's no use shrugging at me. A fact's a fact, if it's ever so absurd a fact. You've always drummed it into me that it's no use quarreling with facts. I *am* gone on both!"

"Then wait till you go a little farther," I counseled. "You are a young — No! You aren't a fool. You're worse. You're wise!"

"It isn't for *you* to decry worldly wisdom," he commented.

"One man's virtues are another man's vices," I retorted. "Age can afford to be wise. Youth should have the faults of youth. One of the proper faults is falling in love. You'll see the point if you wait for number three."

"Then I *shan't*," he asserted obstinately. "I *am* going to marry one of them. They're both such nice girls! I shall wait for the turn scale."

"You make me sick!" I told him. "You'd better go."

He laughed, and went. He turned at the door to say good day.

"I shall wait for the turn scale," he repeated.

I watched him carefully after that. He divided his attentions equally between the two girls, behaving in a perfectly discreet manner, which gave me no ground for objecting on their behalf. They were both very friendly with him, but gave no distinct sign of any stronger feeling. I took possession of Nora whenever I had the chance, to throw him in with Grace. Grace was a cool, collected young woman, who would take care of herself. Nora was a careless little creature, and far too warm-hearted to be thrown away on a halting lover. She reminded me of Anson's aunt many years ago, when I was

engaged to her. She died. He was her favorite nephew. She had just the same way of laughing as Nora has, and her eyes— Well, well! It's a long time ago! Oh, a long, long time!

Unfortunately I found that my manœuvres had an effect opposite to that which I intended. The more difficulty he experienced in getting Nora's company the more he seemed to want it. I was thinking of changing my tactics; and then the turn scale came. Nora's father had losses. They were sudden and complete. His heart was weak, and the shock killed him; and the child was left penniless, and alone.

I started off to her house as soon as I heard. I was not very intimate with the O'Briens, but she had no near relatives, and no suitable friend to help her. I met Anson in the High Street. He seemed perturbed, which is rare with him, and came across the road to speak to me.

"You've heard, I suppose?" he said.

"I have heard," I told him. "Well, you wanted a turn scale."

I walked on without waiting for his answer. I was annoyed with him. I don't quite know why I felt so angry. I think it was because death is a big thing, and his cold-blooded matrimonial projects seemed so small. Perhaps it was merely that I was in a hurry to get to Nora. Anson's aunt had eyes exactly like Nora's. I remembered how they looked when she cried. Well, I never brought her tears. Thank God for that!

"You must persuade Miss Nora to come down and speak to me," I told the servant. "I know she won't want to see a comparative stranger, and will be surprised that I have called, but—"

"Bless you, sir," the woman said, "she'll see you."

I don't know why she said that. I was not specially intimate with the O'Briens, as I have stated. There really was no occasion why I should intervene.

Nora looked a woebegone little creature. Her eyelids were red, and she clutched at nothing with her hands, until they caught the back of a chair.

"God help you, my dear," I said. "I know I can't ease the big trouble, but let me do what I can with the little ones. You haven't anybody to take things off your shoulders, I believe, and—leave the arrangements to me, will you? I don't mean just the—what has to be done. I mean—it will be necessary to consider your future, and—you'll have somewhere to go to, you know. I was thinking that I want a sort of over-housekeeper. I'm an old man—far too old for fifty-seven—and—" She caught my hand and sobbed. "I know," I said. "I know! You don't want a situation. You want love and comfort. There was somebody once, Nora, who was like you. I was engaged to her, and she fell ill, and—she— Come and be my little girl—my little—like a daughter. I'm a grumpy old chap, but I'll be good to you."

"Oh!" she cried. "I know! I know!"

She dropped her head on my shoulder, and clung to me.

"I shan't be a very good housekeeper," she sobbed, "but I shall be a very good little girl. I have no claim on you, no claim at all. If father knew—he thought so much of you. I was sure you would come!"

I don't know what could have made her think that. I expect she only thought that she thought it; but people exaggerate things, and some little charities of mine—a lonely man must interest himself in something—may have been magnified to her ears. I think the child was always disposed to like me.

Anyhow, she accepted my help. I spent the morning going to the undertaker and such people. I sent a dressmaker and milliner to her. Of course I told them to send me the bills. The child had nothing, so far as I could make out; but I told my solicitor to look into her father's affairs. I suggested that, if I paid off a few of the larger claims quietly, there might be a balance on the estate that would make Nora feel a little less dependent. He said he thought we could manage it. He is a reliable chap, and we are old friends.

I went to the club for lunch, as usual. When I passed the billiard room I found

Anson knocking the balls about. It occurred to me that, when he heard I had adopted Nora, that would be a weighty turn scale. I am not a poor man.

I wasn't going to have my little girl married for her money; and I decided that the best way to prevent it was to get him to propose to Grace before he heard.

I went in and spoke to him. I talked about the weather and other things before I came to my subject. If age does not bring wisdom, it brings craft.

"It is a sad thing about O'Brien," I remarked presently. "I hear that he has left nothing but debts. It's a good job you waited for the turn scale."

He jabbed at the ball viciously.

"You think so?" he observed.

"Well," I said, "what would anybody think?" I lit a cigarette. "Anyhow, the scale *has* turned, with a vengeance." I found that the cigarette wasn't properly alight, and struck another match. "Mind you don't wait too long *after* the scale has turned," I advised. "It isn't my business; but I was talking to—I needn't mention any names. I gleaned that there was some one else in the field."

"What!" he cried. He seemed quite upset. "You think that she will refuse me?"

"I haven't the least idea," I said calmly; "but if I were you I wouldn't waste an hour in finding out."

"I—I wrote this morning," he said slowly. "I suppose you'll think that it was rather quick, but—"

I went out without waiting for him to finish. I felt sick; physically sick. To think that Mary's nephew—her favorite nephew—should turn out like that! His first thought, when he heard of Nora's trouble, had been to write off and propose to her rival! I remember telling Mary that some speculations of mine were going badly. She just squeezed my arm. "Then I shall be more help to you," she said. A few days later I told her that they'd come out all right; and she squeezed my arm again. "Then *you'll* be more help to me!" she told me. Money didn't turn any scale with us. If she'd lived, I

always thought we might have had a son like him.

I gulped down my lunch, and went to my solicitor's, and ordered him to make a new will for me to sign that night.

"You can easily get it done," I told him. "It's very simple. The minor legacies are the same as before. The rest goes to Nora O'Brien, instead of to Anson. I am adopting her."

He stared at me.

"If I might say a word," he commenced. I shook my head. "Come, come, old chap. We were at school together."

"It's no use," I told him. "No use at all."

"I should sleep over it," he advised. "You were always fond of the boy, and—she was fond of him."

"That's just it," I told him. "Will you do it or won't you?"

"Of course, if you wish it," he said slowly, "but—I wish you'd give me some inkling of your reasons."

"I will come in just before six to sign it," I interrupted, and left.

Some day, perhaps, I would give him my reasons; but some things are hard to talk about. I could not do it just then. We call ourselves worldly wise; and a touch of sentiment upsets the whole cartload of wisdom.

I went on to Nora's. I found her reading letters of condolence. She had left them unopened all the morning. She passed them on to me, one by one. If they praised her father specially she looked over my shoulder to read them again while I read them. Presently she held up one before opening it, in the curious way that women have. They will spend five minutes guessing, when five seconds and a paper knife would solve the mystery.

"I don't know this writing," she said. "Do you?"

I glanced at it.

"It is Richard Anson's," I said. "It—it is a good hand, isn't it?" I tried to speak lightly.

"Oh!"

Her face flushed and her eyes brightened for a moment; and I knew my little girl's secret certainly. I hadn't had

much doubt before. I turned my head away so that I should not see her disappointment at the formality of his letter. He could not be scoundrel enough to write to her otherwise than formally when he had proposed to Grace by the same post; but I thought him a scoundrel to write at all. Perhaps he couldn't very well help writing. I must make what excuses I could for him. He was Mary's nephew—the favorite one. I had liked the boy for himself, too. A lonely man—No, I had "my little girl" now. And she was being hurt; when she was so hurt already! I daren't look at her.

I waited a long time, and then she touched my arm.

"Dear," she said softly, "will you read it?"

My glasses were misty, and I wiped them first; and then I read this:

MY DEAR NORA: I am so sorry, so very sorry. I thought much of your father. Every one did. Only a good father could have had a daughter like you.

I know that you can't think of the living now; but when you come to face the other

troubles, will you understand that there is some one who wants to work for you and care for you all your life?

If my love can comfort you let me come. If not, forgive me for telling you of it just now.

God bless you, dear!

Yours always,
RICHARD ANSON.

"If father knows," she said brokenly, "he will be glad. Because I love him! *You* are my guardian now, dear. May he come?"

My mind was very busy for five seconds before I answered. I could not give him away, of course; but I could have advised her to wait and make sure that it was not compassion, but love, that moved him. But trouble is the turn scale of affection. It would make him love her more. And if I suggested a doubt of his sincerity—it is so easy to put doubts into a woman's head, and so hard to put them out. I loved the boy, too, and I had misjudged him. The scale had turned; and he was loyal, very loyal. It would never turn back again.

"Yes, my dear," I said. "He may come. God bless you! Both of you!"





PLAYS AND PLAYERS

A FIRST NIGHTER

Louis N. Parker's "Pomander Walk" a refreshing novelty and charmingly acted. New play by Henry Arthur Jones is disappointing. Annie Russell has a rôle that suits her in "The Impostor," which is pleasant comedy well acted. "The Spring Maid," a musical comedy gem, makes Christie MacDonald a star. "Marriage a la Carte," an agreeable blend of tunes and fun and girls, with newcomer, Emmy Wehlen, to help the general effect. "Trelawny of the Wells" revived with Ethel Barrymore in the title rôle.

MR. LOUIS N. PARKER is a sort of theatrical lace maker, and nothing he has done is more delicate than his latest play, "Pomander Walk," revealed as a refreshing substitute for mock heroics and cheap claptrap, with which our stage is so often filled. To say that the first-night audience at Wallack's was delighted with this exquisite little play, and surprised as well, is merely to mention a fact. For "Pomander Walk," more or less unheralded, came as a distinct novelty after a succession of conventional things.

As a play, it has about the same quality you will find in Austin Dobson's verse, a charming sensitiveness, appealing imaginativeness, and the redolence of sweet retrospection. It sets before you those "dear old Georgian days," beloved of the poet, with their fastidiousness of dress, and of manners—yes, and of morals, too.

Where is Pomander Walk? Out Chiswick way—halfway to fairyland. So Mr. Parker describes it, but lest you be deceived as to the nature of the piece, let it be mentioned at once that

not elfins, and goblins, and spirits infest the walk, but very human beings, each with his own little life to live, and each of which in turn provides a story. A row of five little Georgian houses—there were six as originally planned, but the stage would not accommodate them all—and in each of the five a couple of people, at least, whose hopes and ambitions are woven into the delicate texture of Mr. Parker's dramatic lace work.

In Number One, nearest the river, there is the admiral, *Sir Peter Autobus*, who fought under Nelson and lost an eye, and there are *Bos'n Jim*, *Sir Peter's* servant, and the Flagstaff with the Union Jack, and the little brass cannon, and the admiral's pet thrush. In Number Two there is *Mrs. Pamela Poskett*, widow of the late *Admiral Poskett*, and there is her cat, *Sempronius*, who spends most of his time waiting for *The Eyesore* to catch a fish. Number Three is the home of the *Misses Pennymint*, *Ruth* and *Barbara*, spinsters, and of *Doctor Johnson*, *Barbara's* parrot, that was given her by one who loved and went away. *Mr. Basil Pringle* lodges upstairs, and prac-

tices new violin music by a German named Beethoven. In Number Four are *Jerome Brooke-Hoskyn, Esquire*, *Mrs. Brooke-Hoskyn*, the four little *Misses Brooke-Hoskyn*, and *Jane*, the servant. Besides there is—but it is too soon to include this one in the census. The front parlor is let to the *Reverend Sternroyd, D. D., F. S. A.*, whose companions are his books and the memories of his *Araminta*, dead these thirty years. In Number Five there are *Madame Lucie Lachesnais*, *Marjolaine*, her daughter, *Nanette*, and, perhaps, another memory as strong as that which consoles *Doctor Sternroyd's* loneliness.

For once upon a time young *John Sayle* loved *Lucy Pryor*, and she loved him, with a year of happy dreams between them. But he married a grand lady, and *Lucy Pryor* went to France. After a while she married *Pierre Lachesnais*. He left her a widow, with *Marjolaine* and the memory of a splendid man and husband.

It is in the love stories of *John Sayle* and *Lucy Pryor*, and their respective son and daughter, lovers in after years, that the main sentimental interest of Mr. Parker's play concerns itself. For *John Sayle* now has plans for the boy which, as is often the case, do not meet with the latter's ready acquiescence, especially, when, on a visit to the old admiral in Pomander Walk, he encounters *Lucy Pryor's*—that is to say, *Madame Lucie Lachesnais'*—daughter *Marjolaine*, pretty as a picture, and just the proper age for romance. It is love at first sight for this pretty pair, with love-making carried on amid difficulties, since people in Pomander Walk are inclined to gossip if given half a chance. Of course *John Sayle* is furious when he finds that the plans for his son are likely to miscarry, but furious no longer when he discovers in *Marjolaine's* pretty mother the ripened flower of his earlier fancy. And so it is love's young dream all over again for him and for *Lucy Pryor*, with a consequent blessing of her child and his.

But sentiment is not all of Pomander Walk. Oh, no, indeed. It blends a most engaging vein of fun, represent-

ed in quaint people and quaint doings. There is, for instance, *The Eyesore*, a sort of raggedy, raggedy man of Georgian days, who persists in fishing all day long in plain view of the Walk, and to the detriment of its otherwise prim and pleasing landscape. And while *The Eyesore* baits his hook and line, *Sempiorius*, the cat, adored of one of the old-maid residents, sits greedily by, awaiting his chance to steal the catch. Which, indeed, he does one day, and very nearly goes to his death in a watery grave, being promptly flung into the river by the indignant *Eyesore*, yet gallantly rescued by the admiral. And the admiral, too, has a love story, though not of his own making, being eventually lured into the matrimonial net by the conniving *Widow Poskett*. It is the happiest of plays, with odd figures like *The Lamplighter* and *The Muffin Man* to remind you of departed customs, and a company of well-selected actors to properly interpret the quaintness of the old-world figures.

Of these Mr. George Giddens, an admirably mellow and resourceful character comedian, takes first place, but shares some honors with Mr. Lennox Pawle. It is Mr. Pawle who plays a retired butler, lording it over Pomander Walk as a man of quality, and very near betrayal at the hands of the elder *Sayle*, who recognizes him for what he really is. Then there are the charming *Lachesnais* ladies, mother and daughter, played respectively by Miss Sybil Carlisle and Miss Dorothy Parker, the latter a daughter of the playwright.

Of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones' newest play it is not possible to speak with great enthusiasm. This, too, in spite of the fact that it is a well-written and authoritatively constructed play, to which on dramaturgic grounds no exception need be taken. Unfortunately, however, its contents are rather stale, so there is little of suspense in the action, and certainly nothing of surprise. And these are qualities which our theatrically overfed audiences now insistently demand.

Mr. Jones calls his play "We Can't Be as Bad as All That," and in it he

introduces once again that section of the English smart set whose interests in life are presumably centered in the playing of bridge whist and the spreading of malicious scandal. The first brings debts, the second vindictiveness and heartbreak. The combination in this play results in a series of portraits of people practically every one of whom earns your everlasting contempt.

Even the heroine, *Mrs. Engaine*, antecedents unknown at the opening of the story, has a past, and by her own accounts, though it bears the usual coating of sentimental whitewash, a past that is not especially glorious. For *Mrs. Engaine*, it seems, had loved years before a certain *Harry Furnivall*, rising M. P. and man of family, who deserted his wife and his career, to elope with her. Known in those days as *Nora Shard*, the woman had thought only of her love for the man, and his death in a railroad wreck, immediately after their departure, has shaken her most mightily. But to outward appearances at least she has seemed reconciled to his fate in a second marriage, this time to an invalid, who needed the care she could give him. Now, some time after this second husband's death, she has encountered *Sir Ralph Newell* on a long sea voyage, the two have become friends, and, at his request, she is accepting hospitalities at the home of his cousin, *Lady Carnforth*.

Lady Carnforth has a brother, who is an outright scamp, and he hopes to amend his broken fortunes by a marriage with *Mrs. Engaine's* stepdaughter. But *Mrs. Engaine* will have none of it, knowing the young man's history, and determined to protect the girl, even against her own misplaced affections. And as *Mrs. Engaine* loves the stepchild so *Lady Carnforth* loves her worthless brother, the result eventually being a strategic duel between the two women.

In the household there is a dissolute old clubman who thinks he recognizes in *Mrs. Engaine* the *Nora Shard* of an earlier scandal, and he soon convinces himself and others of the truth of the conjecture. The best card, then, lies

in *Lady Carnforth's* hands, until the discovery that her brother has stolen and made off with a valuable pearl necklace belonging to *Mrs. Engaine*, had it duplicated in paste, and satisfied a money lender's claim with the profits of the transaction.

Obviously *Mrs. Engaine* now takes the trick, especially as she has already confessed her earlier history to the man she loves, and who, eventually, is ready to forgive and marry her.

Of the players, Miss Katherine Kaelred, as the woman with the past, has the best opportunities, and in greater part avails herself of them. But there is finer art in the acting of Miss Charlotte Granville as the scheming society matron fighting for her brother's honor. Mr. Nye Chart in the heroic rôle is most agreeable, and amusing figures are contributed by Mrs. Sam Sothern, Miss Veda McEvers, Miss Kate Phillips, and Miss Alice Wilson.

For her most recent appearances in New York, Miss Annie Russell, who has long suffered for want of a good play, now has "The Impostor," by Leonard Merrick and Michael Morton. It is a piece which, under ordinary conditions, might have won considerable favor. Unfortunately for the greater interest, it suffers somewhat from its general placidity, being without any specially sensational features to bring it to the attention of playgoers. And with productions as numerous as they are this season, it is almost inevitable that a play in this lighter, easier vein should be overlooked.

The play tells a fresh story in a pleasant way, however, with several excellently contrived situations, some brightness of lines, and, almost always, it is competently acted. "The Impostor" of the title is a young woman, a singer, who finds herself in London without funds, and about to be evicted from her lodgings. Walking down the street, she encounters a young man, evidently sympathetic and with good intentions, who discovers that she is on the verge of starvation, and insists upon giving her food and shelter in his hotel apartments.

There, as may be inferred, he blun-

ders in the usual way, but apologizes promptly when he discovers that the girl is honest, and is about to withdraw when a woman acquaintance happens in. The circumstances would look peculiar, and unpleasant gossip might result, so on the spur of the moment he introduces the girl as his wife's sister, the fib involving consequences that he cannot foresee. For as a result of a natural enough series of coincidences the girl is later found by some of his friends, and, much against her will, forced to stay with them in their home, always, of course, on the assumption that she is the sister-in-law in question.

By the time the disclosure comes—which come it must, of course—she has won the love of a good man, who understands the situation and has great faith, so she is able to go forth without much fear of future difficulties.

The play provides Miss Russell with the opportunities of her best and most pleasing style of work, which it need hardly be mentioned combines sweetness, sympathy, and naturalness. Wilfred Draycott, Charles Richman, and Oswald Yorke are conspicuous in her support. The play was produced at the Garrick.

With a basic idea that harks back to "She Stoops to Conquer," the musical comedy called "The Spring Maid," making a star of Christie MacDonald, has come into positive favor at the Liberty Theater. Nor is this surprising, for, as these things go, it is a gem. To begin with, it tells its old story in a pleasing way, with enough of novelty to interest anew, and it is filled with music that charms at once, and lingers most persistently in memory.

"The Spring Maid" is an adaptation from "Die Sprudelfee," an operetta by Heinrich Reinhardt, of which the German book by the Messrs. Wilner has given place in large part to the work of the Messrs. Smith, Americans. Mixing the concoction of songs, and jokes, and dances, Mr. George Marion, as chief cook, has formed a graceful blend of colorful things, with pretty girls galore, and good voices where most needed.

The story concerns one *Prince Adalar*, who esteems himself highly, especially as a lover and winner of affection. But he holds women of his own class cold, preferring to charm the beauties of "the lower classes," and eventually meeting his Waterloo, as such men must, at the hands of a clever little masquerader. He has heard much of the charms of *Annamirl*, one of the girls who dispense water at the Carlsbad springs, but before he has had time to meet her the *Princess Bosna*, having heard his boastings, takes the other's place. You may be sure, too, that she leads him a pretty dance before they plight their mutual troths, the young boaster, of course, falling a victim to her beauty from the very start.

Dialogue rather brighter than the general run and music that is most soothing make "The Spring Maid" an entertainment of rare delight, especially with a cast which is admirably chosen to get the best out of both book and music. For the spring maid herself, no better choice could have been made, Miss MacDonald being the daintiest of pictures to the eye, and a most agreeable purveyor of sweet sounds to ears occasionally affrighted by the so-called singing of people in this type of entertainment.

Miss Elgie Bowen does not sing so well, but dances beautifully, and at one stage of the proceeding—a graceful advertisement introduced between the acts—she takes the honors for pulchritudinous display. The humor is chiefly supplied by Tom McNaughton, recently of the vaudevilles, who plays a comic-paper sort of tragedian with ludicrous effect.

In London, which he has made his habitat for some years, Mr. Ivan Caryll is extremely well known for his contributions of music to the various Gayety successes, successively, and often successfully, brought to New York to increase the fame and swell the royalties of the composer. In "Marriage à la Carte" at the Casino, Mr. Caryll for the first time gives us one of his works prior to its London appearance, his collaborator in this in-

stance being Mr. C. M. S. McLellan, best known here before he took up residence abroad for "The Belle of New York," and since by "Leah Kleschna," played several years ago by Mrs. Fiske.

To these two, and to Auten Hurgon, who was brought to this country to stage the piece, credit should go for an entertainment, which, though it may not appeal too strongly to those who insist on references to Broadway, lobster palaces, and all that is Tenderloinese, has plenty of distinction and charm, and a humor unusual in this class of play. Briefly, the story concerns a wife who was so engrossed with her own importance that she pays very little attention to her husband. The first of these, *Napoleon Pettingill*, ran away twenty years before the play begins, and in due time the wife, divorced, married *Ponsonby De Coutts Wragge*, who also ran away. *Napoleon* took his daughter with him, and in the play she appears as a wire walker in a circus of which he is the proprietor. The two husbands, the second now a minstrel, meet, and the comedy element is provided by their mutual efforts to avoid encountering the woman who was once able to claim each as a better half, while denying them all rights to assert their authority.

Now, as may be imagined, this is not a particularly new motive, and yet it is handled with enough freshness to make it amusing at times, while the engaging personality of Miss Emmy Wehlen, a Viennese newcomer by way of London, helps it all immensely.

Mr. Harry Conor serves as the central comic figure, and is generally amusing. Once or twice, in fact, he is excruciatingly funny.

Mr. Caryll's music is by no means revolutionary—in fact, it is mostly all familiar—but it has the lilt which makes popularity and helps the business of the song publishers.

Familiar matter mostly, with occasional touches of freshness in the dialogue and acting, makes up the scheme of "Over Night," a farce by Phillip H. Bartholomae, produced at the Hackett. Given a weak man, married to a strong-minded woman, and a conventional girl,

married to an average sort of youth, both ceremonies having taken place in the morning of the first act; a honeymoon trip in contemplation by both pairs, the intended trip being scheduled for an Albany day liner up the Hudson; mutual recognitions aboard the vessel prior to departure, and absenting of one husband and one wife at the moment the whistle blows, with the necessity for a continuation of the journey by the partner of the one with the partner of the other. Complications resulting from the presence of friends of both families encountered aboard the steam-boat, who persist in believing that the two young people are married to each other, a mistake easily averted by a frank explanation, which, however, would result in no play. And further artificial complications upon arrival at the first stop where they must put up at a hotel.

It is Mr. Bartholomae's first acted play, and of its kind is not without cleverness. And a good company does it justice. Margaret Lawrence is the refreshingly unaffected younger heroine, and Herbert A. Yost the easily embarrassed companion of her troubles. Jean Newcombe, Grace Griswold, Max Freeman, and Norma Winslow contribute other amusing figures.

The appearance at the Empire of Miss Ethel Barrymore in a revival of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero's delightful comedietta, "Trelawny of the Wells," may be chronicled as one of the interesting events of a month which has seen many disasters in plays produced only to be removed hurriedly to the storehouse of dead hopes.

Miss Barrymore does not efface memories of Miss Mary Mannering in the rôle, but in its more sentimental phases she contributes a sureness of emotion that is most affecting. And the play, for all the lapse of years, is as delightful an experience as one can well imagine. It is well cast, too, for the most part, Miss Constance Collier, an admirably versatile actress, Miss Louise Drew, Mr. George C. Boniface, and Mr. Charles Walcot providing especially fine acting.



FOR BOOK LOVERS

AVOLUME of ten stories by Edith Wharton has been published by Charles Scribner's Sons under the title, "Tales of Men and Ghosts."

As may be inferred from the name of the book, the stories are rather fanciful productions, of the sort intended, probably, to appeal to a decidedly epicurean taste.

The strongest impression made upon the mind of the reader of these tales is that the characters are not ordinary people, in truth they seem to be hardly more than half human; as to the half that is not human, it is difficult to classify it, for it is like nothing else that is known in heaven above or in the waters under the earth. Of course, it is to be presumed that this is exactly what Mrs. Wharton intended, and she has produced her results by mixing the most incongruous elements to be found in the mental and moral make-up of men and women, bestowing upon the compound the gift of personality.

The very first story in the book offers a good illustration of this method. Herbert Granice reminds us of the hero of a fairy story by Laboulaye, if we remember correctly. Perlino, his name was. The resemblance lies in the manner of the manufacture of the two gentlemen, not at all in their characters.

It is never safe to say that anything is impossible in human nature, but that is a very different thing from saying that certain supposed aspects of human nature in fiction are impossible. In this sense Granice is impossible, so is Ronald Grew in "His Father's Son" and Humphrey Neave in "The Daunt Diana" and Galen Dredge in "The

Debt" and Betton and Vyse in "Full Circle," and indeed all of them.

We have said that Mrs. Wharton probably meant to present her characters in these stories as human impossibilities; but it may be added that she has never shown herself capable of portraying a convincing masculine character in any of her stories. In this lay the chief defect in "The House of Mirth" and "The Fruit of the Tree."



"Mollie Make-Believe" is the name of a fantastic little story by Eleanor Hallowell Abbott, published by the Century Company.

In this story Miss Abbott has obviously made an effort to put a restraint upon her customary exuberant diction, and has striven to transfer her illusion and terrifying figures from phraseology to plot. The result, while perhaps not quite so weird in effect, is yet sufficiently startling.

Carl Stanton is the name of the young man who figures most prominently in the story and shares the honors with Cornelia, the young woman to whom he is engaged, and Mollie, the maid, who comforts him. Carl plays the part, throughout the story, of the sick-a-bed gentleman, for he passes most of the time confined to his room, unromantically afflicted with inflammatory rheumatism.

Cornelia is the high-bred, frigid, New England virgin, found mostly between the covers of novels, who abandons her lover to make the customary midwinter visit to Florida. She leaves him, as his only comfort, the circular of

the Serial Letter Company, a concern which purports to supply "real letters from imaginary persons." Love letters, daily, of three grades—shy, medium, and very intense—are included in the company's list, and Carl decides to order this series as a substitute for Cornelia's chilliness.

These letters, we are sure, are of the third grade; at any rate, they seem to be so intended by the author. They are signed "Mollie"; hence "Mollie Make-Believe." The outcome of it all is not altogether cryptic; indeed, it might be said to be obvious, the only uncertainty being as to the manner of the dissolution of the tie that bound Carl to Cornelia. She was much perturbed until she found that it was not his letter that jilted her, but her temperament that jilted him. This is cryptic to us, but other readers of the book may understand it.



The Bobbs-Merrill Company has just published a new novel by Frederick S. Isham, which he calls "The Social Buccaneer." It may be very properly called a modern adventure story, the scene of which is laid in long-suffering New York, and in it a forty-thousand-dollar string of pearls figures conspicuously, if somewhat vaguely.

Mr. Chatfield Bruce is the undisputed hero of the tale. We are pretty sure that he is a Manhattan Beau Brummel in spite of the fact that he occupies a decidedly subordinate position in the employ of Mr. Samuel Goldberg, importer of French silks and ladies' goods. He has a good income of his own, is welcomed by every one in town whose welcome means anything, and is surrounded by a mystery which no one but the reader is aware of—and the reader is still aware of it when he has finished the story.

He has apparently previously been involved in some way with certain Chinese and one Sir Archibald Bamford in such a way as to win the friendship of the former and the hostility of the latter, but in just what way does not appear with any great clarity.

The strange theft of the Page bonds from a safe-deposit vault and of the Goldberg pearls from a house safe constitutes the mystery element of the tale. It is to be inferred that Mr. Bruce has lifted both for the purpose of bestowing the proceeds in charity. Perhaps there is no doubt of this, but we are unwilling to draw conclusions from the evidence presented. Mr. Bruce makes something like a confession under the pressure of a tender feeling he has developed for Miss Marjorie Wood, but if we were in Miss Wood's place we should hardly be satisfied that it was more than confession and avoidance.



"The Prodigal Pro Tem" is Frederick Orin Bartlett's latest novel. It is published by Small, Maynard & Co.

The style of the tale is its most striking feature. The author appears to have made up his mind to try something new in story-telling manner, and so he has adopted and used dialogue practically through the whole of the story. Not only that, but the dialogue has its own peculiar character, which may be described as *staccato*.

Here is a sample:

"I don't understand."

"How many up there must know of this?" he inquired.

"There is only Aunt Philomela," she managed to answer.

"The servants?"

"They have heard of Joe, but never seen him."

"The neighborhood?"

"We moved here after Joe left."

There are three hundred and thirty pages of this with bits of narrative writing interjected.

In an age in which talking is pathological this sort of thing is not surprising. It may at first appear to have the virtue of sententiousness, but upon analysis it will be found to lack pith, and after a while becomes tiresome.

The plot is quite slender. Barnes, Junior, a rich man's son, with aspirations toward Art, enters the Langdon household as the impersonator of the

prodigal son who cannot be lured home from Alaska even to satisfy the longings of his blind father. The substitution brings back the old man from the brink of the grave, pleases his daughter Eleanor, and scandalizes the prim Aunt Philomela. Eleanor is a gifted young woman, and plays on the cello "Rath's 'Leonore'"—it couldn't be Raff's "Leonore," because nobody plays whole symphonies, mixed with Spanish airs and negro melodies, immediately after dinner—and of course there is a love story. You can guess what it is.



Doubleday, Page & Co. have hitherto published the works of O. Henry in a uniform set in cloth, including all but a few of his short stories. They are now bringing out the same volumes in a handsome leather binding with flexible covers.

It is an undertaking upon which they are to be congratulated, and for which they are entitled to the thanks of every friend of O. Henry and of every one who loves his work, for it seems to be certain now that his short stories are to take their place among the best and most enduring types of American fiction.

Some critics, although appreciative, have expressed doubts of this on account of what they have called the ephemeral character of the tales; but, as it seems to us, they have overlooked the eternally human quality in them which makes them always new



Two new novels in one year by one author is not an unheard-of achievement, but it is rare enough to provoke comment. Miss Marie Van Vorst has published, through the Bobbs-Merrill Company, her second book in 1910 under the title, "First Love."

It is, of course, a love story told in Miss Van Vorst's characteristically vigorous and direct manner. She always rivets the attention of her readers, for when she chooses a theme for

a story she never wavers in her pursuit of it to its logical conclusions, and that is what gives her work its strength and interest.

She has never shown her relentless-ness in this respect more unmistakably or to more advantage than in "First Love." The passion of young John Bennett for a woman many years older than himself is made thoroughly convincing from its very first appearance up to the final scene, in which it sweeps him off his feet. But, whether Miss Van Vorst intended it or not, this is not the real point of the story; it is rather an accessory, though an essential one.

The character of Virginia Bathurst is what gives the book its quality, and John Bennett's love for her is the means used to develop and display the woman's strength and sagacity. As the story is told, it is not difficult to understand Mrs. Bathurst's temptation to yield to the attractive boy or to appreciate the depth of her renunciation.



Important New Books.

"The Golden Web," Anthony Partridge, Little, Brown & Co.

"The Capture of Paul Beck," McDonnell Bodkin, Little, Brown & Co.

"When the Half-gods Go," Helen R. Martin, Century Co.

"Howard's End," Edward M. Forster, G. P. Putnam's Sons.

"Patsy," H. de Vere Stacpole, Duffield & Co.

"The Root of Evil," Thomas Dixon, Doubleday, Page & Co.

"The Trail of Ninety-Eight," Robert W. Service, Dodd, Mead & Co.

"The Patricians," John Galsworthy, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"The Lever," William D. Orcutt, Harper & Bros.

"The Great Diamond Pipe," Florence Morse Kingsley, Dodd, Mead & Co.

"Robert Kimberley," Frank H. Spearman, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"The Gift of the Grass," John Trotwood Moore, Little, Brown & Co.

"The Purchase Price," Emerson Hough, Bobbs-Merrill Co.

"Her Little Young Ladyship," Myra Kelley, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Master and Maid," L. Allen Harker, Charles Scribner's Sons.

Talks With Ainslee's Readers

THREE are two topics that we want to talk to you about this month because of the very unusual interest that you have shown in them.

The first can be best introduced by a letter addressed to the editor of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE and only recently received. It is as follows:

"It happens that I am a woman who married a very rich man who rarely honors America with his presence. Idly running over your magazine in my doctor's office today, I came on a short story called 'Curb,' by Margareta Tuttle, that simply astounded me by its insight into the emptiness of living of the merely rich woman. In one half page this writer has uncovered the experience of a life, with absolute truth; a life that has money without love, attention without friendship. I am glad we are to hear further of this; and trust to find the same woman again between your leaves. One does not expect insight in a short story—there is so much trash nowadays. This writer, however, is clairvoyant. I know. I live the life.

"It would not have occurred to me to write to you but for your invitation to do so, that I found when I was hunting for more information about this writer.

"Yours very sincerely,

_____"

This may be supplemented by some extracts from another letter written by a man, referring to Mrs. Tuttle's story, "The Greatest of These." He says it was a story that was unusual,

"Because, unlike most women's writing, it combined a certain savage sincerity with very real culture; the kind of culture that raises the tone of the magazine in which it is found, and that men have oftener than women. In your January number you have another story by her that has the same atmosphere of culture, and happens to be about a clergyman. If there are to be more of them, as you say, I should like to send them to a rector who says that no woman can write well enough about men for men to read it. . . . There

are two other men whom I propose to furnish AINSLEE'S to for a year, that they may read about themselves. One makes love to married women and the other would like to. They need this stuff; it gets at the truth without preaching."



THREE letters interested us extremely, and we will be very much surprised if they don't interest you; they give us something to think about; they express the masculine and the feminine point of view; they bring up for consideration and discussion questions which are of vital interest to almost everybody; they are obviously written by a man and a woman who are experienced and thoughtful.

Now, we don't want to lure you into anything like a debate over the problems which agitate the public mind, whether they be economic, social, political, industrial, domestic, or sex problems. You don't buy and read AINSLEE'S for any such purpose; you read it to be entertained by its fiction; you turn to it every month for relaxation, for diversion from your own personal problems, from the vexations and worries that all of us have.

Taking these letters as a text, however, we want to point out to you how inevitably a good story furnishes food for reflection. Its chief fascination is that it brings to its readers the pleasure of thinking, without imposing it upon any one as a task; in other words, it gives the satisfaction of mental concentration without conscious effort of will.



MRS. TUTTLE seems to have convinced one man that she can write "well enough about men for men to read it." This comment is interesting, and it is rather significant, too, considering the fact that she was educated and trained by a man. Her father was the editor of a big city newspaper and a man who, in spite of the unceasing demands made upon him, found time to give his daughter all the priceless benefits of the

companionship and experience which a father has to share with a daughter; she was, in the language which she uses respecting a woman in one of her stories, "brought up by a man," and the result has been so effective that it is immediately apprehended.

The first letter that we have quoted above bears witness, unconsciously, of course, to the writer, to the fact that Mrs. Tuttle had the advantage of close association with the editor of a newspaper. To say that "in half a page this writer has uncovered the experience of a life" is quite a tribute to one's power of observation and condensation, a power that newspaper men are obliged to cultivate sedulously and continuously.

These things, added to Mrs. Tuttle's undoubtedly gifts as a story-teller, have been combined in the series which she is now writing for AINSLEE'S, and it is no wonder that you have all been so stirred up over them. She has given you, in the characters of Mrs. Carson, the rector, and the arch-deacon, and all of the minor actors, a set of people who are always thoroughly human, no matter what the circumstances may be, and that's what you want, isn't it?



THE second topic that we want to talk to you about concerns O. Henry. We gave you in the February number a reprint of "Money Maze," the first story of his that ever appeared in a magazine. You remember that when we made the announcement of our intention, we confessed to some misgivings as to its wisdom. We are prepared now to admit our shortsightedness, for we have had from you nothing but enthusiastic approval of the idea.

Here is what some of you say:

"I would like to put in my plea for as many of the O. Henry stories reprinted as possible. His combination of real humor, and the great tenderness that gave him insight into the needs of the poor in heart and life made him, according to my opinion, the greatest short story writer of his time in America."

"Another proof of his universality of greatness lay in the fact that the uncultivated with the cultivated understood and liked him."

"I am glad to note that you intend publishing O. Henry's first story, and trust you will give us some more of his early ones."

"Your proposed republishing of some of O. Henry's stories is a great inspiration. Every one ought to hail this resolution as a great idea. There are very few of his tales that will not bear reading a second time. Having read all of his stories within reach, either in book form or otherwise, I am most eager to see his first. . . . What I wanted to say especially in this communication is this: Wouldn't it be possible for AINSLEE'S to publish a short account of Mr. Porter's life and 'habits'? Such a breezy personality shows through his products that any account of him should prove most welcome to his many admirers."



SO we have been encouraged to print more of his early stories. The second one, "The Flag Paramount," you will find in this number, and another one in April.

The suggestion as to publishing a sketch of Mr. Porter is, perhaps, worth considering. We are rather doubtful about the advisability of making it a conventional biography, long or short, for an article or articles in that form seems a little inappropriate for AINSLEE'S. We have access, however, to a mass of material which can be called "O. Henry Documents," which give, perhaps, a much better idea of his "breezy personality" than any formal biography could possibly do, and it may be that a collection and arrangement of these can be made in such shape as to be exceedingly entertaining. What do you think of it?



WE wish we had the space to print all of the letters that you have written to us since we began these talks with you; perhaps we shall find it some time. But meanwhile let us keep up this stimulating conversation with each other, for it is doing us a lot of good. We ourselves are getting to know you better, and you, we believe, have begun to take a rather more human, personal interest in us. This means that a sound basis of mutual confidence is being established, one which makes possible an honest exchange of opinions and comparison of tastes. We want you to talk to us as freely and unreservedly as you would to your best friend; we want you to like us if you can; and if you find anything you don't like about the magazine to tell us what it is and why.

WHY MAN OF TODAY IS ONLY 50 PER CENT. EFFICIENT

By WALTER WALGROVE

If one were to form an opinion from the number of helpful, inspiring and informing articles one sees in the public press and magazines, the purpose of which is to increase our efficiency, he must believe that the entire American Nation is striving for such an end—

And this is so.

The American Man because the race is swifter every day: competition is keener and the stronger the man the greater his capacity to win. The stronger the man the stronger his will and brain, and the greater his ability to match wits and win. The greater his confidence in himself the greater the confidence of other people in him: the keener his wit and the clearer his brain.

The American Woman because she must be competent to rear and manage the family and home, and take all the thought and responsibility from the shoulders of the man whose present-day business burdens are all that he can carry.

Now what are we doing to secure that efficiency? Much mentally, some of us much physically, but what is the trouble?

We are not really efficient more than half the time. Half the time blue and worried—all the time nervous—some of the time really incapacitated by illness.

There is a reason for this—a practical reason, one that has been known to physicians for quite a period and will be known to the entire World ere long.

That reason is that the human system does not, and will not, rid itself of all the waste which it accumulates under our present mode of living. No matter how regular we are, the food we eat and the sedentary lives we live (even though we do get some exercise) make it impossible; just as impossible as it is for the grate of a stove to rid itself of clinkers.

And the waste does to us exactly what the

clinkers do to the stove; make the fire burn low and inefficiently until enough clinkers have accumulated, and then prevent its burning at all.

It has been our habit, after this waste has reduced our efficiency about 75 per cent., to drug ourselves; or after we have become 100 per cent. inefficient through illness, to still further attempt to rid ourselves of it in the same way—by drugging.

If a clock is not cleaned once in a while it clogs up and stops; the same way with an engine because of the residue which it, itself, accumulates. To clean the clock, you would not put acid on the parts, though you could probably find one that would do the work, nor to clean the engine would you force a cleaner through it that would injure its parts; yet that is the process you employ when you drug the system to rid it of waste.

You would clean your clock and engine with a harmless cleanser that Nature has provided, and you can do exactly the same for yourself as I will demonstrate before I conclude.

The reason that a physician's first step in illness is to purge the system is that no medicine can take effect nor can the system work properly while the colon (large intestine) is clogged up. If the colon were not clogged up the chances are 10 to 1 that you would not have been ill at all.

It may take some time for the clogging process to reach the stage where it produces real illness but, no matter how long it takes, while it is going on the functions are not working so as to keep us up to "concert pitch." Our livers are sluggish, we are dull and heavy—slight or severe headaches, come on—our sleep does not rest us—in short, we are about 50 per cent. efficient.

And if this condition progresses to where real illness develops, it is impossible to tell what form that illness will take, because—

The blood is constantly circulating through the colon and, taking up by absorption the poisons in the waste which it contains, it distributes them throughout the system and weakens it so that we are subject to whatever disease is most prevalent.

The nature of the illness depends on our own little weaknesses and what we are the least able to resist.

These facts are all scientifically correct in every particular, and it has often surprised me that they are not more generally known and appreciated. All we have to do is to consider the treatment that we have received in illness to realize fully how it developed, and the methods used to remove it.

So you see that not only is accumulated waste directly and constantly pulling down our efficiency by making our blood poor and our intellect dull—our spirits low and our ambitions weak, but it is responsible through its weakening and infecting processes for a list of illnesses that if catalogued here would seem almost unbelievable.

It is the direct and immediate cause of that very expensive and dangerous complaint—appendicitis.

If we can successfully eliminate the waste all our functions work properly and in accord—there are no poisons being taken up by the blood, so it is pure and imparts strength to every part of the body instead of weakness—there is nothing to clog up the system and make us bilious, dull and nervously fearful.

With everything working in perfect accord and without obstruction, our brains are clear, our entire physical being is competent to respond quickly to every requirement, and we are 100 per cent. efficient.

Now this waste that I speak of cannot be thoroughly removed by drugs, but even if it could the effect of these drugs on the functions is very unnatural, and if continued becomes a periodical necessity.

Note the opinions on drugging of two most eminent physicians:

Prof. Alonzo Clark, M. D., of the New York College of Physicians and Surgeons, says: "All of our curative agents are poisons, and as a consequence, every dose diminishes the patient's vitality."

Prof. Joseph M. Smith, M. D., of the same school, says, "All medicines which enter the circulation poison the blood in the same manner as do the poisons that produce disease."

Now, the internal organism can be kept as sweet and pure and clean as the external and by the same natural, sane method—bathing. By the proper system warm water can be introduced so that the colon is perfectly cleansed and kept pure.

There is no violence in this process—it seems to be just as normal and natural as washing one's hands.

Physicians are taking it up more widely and generally every day, and it seems as though everyone should be informed thoroughly on a practice which, though so rational and simple, is revolutionary in its accomplishments.

This is rather a delicate subject to write of exhaustively in the public press, but Chas. A. Tyrrell, M. D., has prepared an interesting treatise on "The What, The Why, The Way" of the Internal Bath, which he will send without cost to any one addressing him at 134 West 65th Street, New York, and mentioning that they have read this article in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE.

Personally, I am enthusiastic on Internal Bathing because I have seen what it has done in illness as well as in health, and I believe that every person who wishes to keep in as near a perfect condition as is humanly possible should at least be informed on this subject; he will also probably learn something about himself which he has never known through reading the little book to which I refer.



"All through the life of a feeble-bodied man his path is lined with memory's grave-stones which mark the spot where noble enterprises perished for lack of physical vigor to embody them in deeds"—Horace Mann.

Grape-Nuts

FOOD

scientifically meets Nature's demand for the necessary food elements, in proper balance.

Its rich nourishment is in concentrated, partly pre-digested form, supplying the vigor and endurance necessary for the accomplishment of one's life purposes.

"There's a Reason"

Postum Cereal Company, Ltd., Battle Creek, Michigan, U. S. A.

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Madam—

No matter what you have decided to serve for luncheon or dinner, do not fail to add Nabisco Sugar Wafers for dessert.

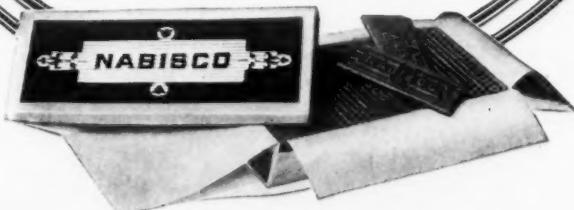
These dessert confections are so tempting and inviting that they not only make a good meal better, but oftentimes save a poor one.

Always fresh and delightful in flavor.

In ten-cent tins

Also in twenty-five cent tins

CHOCOLATE TOKENS—similar to NABISCO, but with a delicious outer shell of rich chocolate.



NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

Look before you lease

The old adage, "look before you leap" now reads, "look before you lease." A poorly heated building is no renting (or sales) bargain at any price—because no house is really worth living in without plenty of clean, healthful, invigorating warmth. That is why

AMERICAN & IDEAL RADIATORS

are proving in many thousands of buildings, of all classes, in America and Europe, to be the greatest boon of the century in utmost betterment of living conditions, as well as in *reducing the cost of living*.

IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators bring *freedom* from the back-breaking work, ash-dust and poisonous coal-gases which attend the use of old-style heating devices. At the same time, an outfit of IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators will prove to be a dividend-paying investment to you—far better than bonds at 6%—as in a few years the outfit saves enough in coal and cleaning, time and temper, no

rusting or repairs, to quickly repay the original cost. Any owner, architect or real estate agent will tell you that IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators will attract and hold best tenants at 10% to 15% higher rental; or assist to sell the property quicker, at full price paid for the outfit.



A No. 3015 IDEAL Boiler and 400 ft. of 36-in. AMERICAN Radiators, costing the owner \$125, were used to heat this cottage.

At these prices the goods can be bought of any reputable, competent dealer. This did not include cost of pipe, valves, freight, etc., which installation is extra and varies according to climatic and other conditions.



A No. 3-22 IDEAL Boiler and 400 ft. of 36-in. AMERICAN Radiators, costing the owner \$315, were used to heat this cottage.

Whether landlord, tenant, or intending builder, whether your building is OLD or new, FARM or city, it will pay you well to LOOK INTO the merits of IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators. Tell us of the building you wish to heat. Our information and catalog (free) put you under no obligation to buy. Prices are now most favorable.

Write today.

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Write to Dept. 39
Chicago



Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Tire Bills Cut in Two



No-Rim-Cut Tire



Ordinary Clincher Tire

Goodyear No-Rim-Cut—Goodyear oversize tires—under average conditions cut tire bills in two.

And that saving is clear. These patented tires now cost nothing extra. Our multiplied output—\$8,500,000 last year—has cut the cost of production.

No Rim-Cutting

Half of the saving comes in avoidance of rim-cutting. The two pictures above show you how this is done. Both tires are shown fitted in the same rim—the standard rim used for quick-detachable tires. Also for demountable rims.

The left picture shows how the removable rim flanges are set to curve outward with No-Rim-Cut tires. The tire comes against a rounded edge, and rim-cutting is made impossible.

We have sold half a million No-Rim-Cut tires. We have run them flat in a hundred tests—as far as 20 miles. In all this experience there has never been an instance of rim-cutting.

The picture at right shows how ordinary tires—clincher tires—are fitted to this same standard rim. The movable rim flanges must be set to curve inward—to grasp hold of the hook in the tire. That is how the tires are held on.

Note how the hook of the flange then digs into the tire. That is what causes rim-cutting. A punctured

tire may be ruined beyond repair by running a single block.

Hooks are not needed with Goodyear No-Rim-Cut tires. Not even tire bolts are needed. The tire stays on because 63 braided wires are vulcanized into the base. They make the tire base un-stretchable, so nothing can ever force it over the flange.

When the tire is inflated the braided wires contract. The tire is then held to the rim by a pressure of 134 pounds to the inch.

This braided wire feature—which we control—forms the only practical way to make a hookless tire. A hard rubber base won't do—a single wire won't do. The braided wires which contract under air pressure are essential to safety.

10% Oversize

Goodyear No-Rim-Cut tires are made 10 per cent wider than rated size. That means 10 per cent more tire—more carrying capacity—without any extra cost. That adds on the average 25 per cent to the tire mileage—saves 25 per cent of tire cost.

Tires are overloaded nine cases in ten. The tire size is not sufficient to take care of the extras—the top, glass front, gas tank, extra tire, etc. The result is a blow-out long before the tire is worn out.

This extra size, which we give you free, takes care of the extra weight. You get all these advantages without extra cost when you specify Goodyear No-Rim-Cut tires. Our Tire Book is mailed free.

GOOD
YEAR
No-Rim-Cut Tires
With or Without Non-Skid Tread

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Branches and Agencies in All the Principal Cities
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We Make All Sorts of Rubber Tires

Annual Special Sale OSTERMOOR

Extra Thick

\$30.00

French Edge

MATTRESS

\$18.50

Delivered

If you have an
Ostermoor Catalogue,
"The Test of Time," at home,
see page 139, as shown

Catalog Mailed Free if You Wish

In the course of our enormous business, hundreds of ticking remnants accumulate. We take this annual opportunity to move them. You get the financial benefit—we clear our stock.

These mattresses cost \$30. regularly, and are in every way as great, if not greater bargains than those sold last year at the special price of \$18.50. If you were fortunate enough to secure one, you will fully appreciate the present sale.

Mattresses are all full, double-bed size, 4 feet 6 inches wide, 6 feet 4 inches long, in one or two parts, round corners, 5-inch inseamed borders, French Rolled Edges, exactly like illustration. Built in the most luxurious possible manner by our most expert specialists.

Filling is especially selected Ostermoor Sheets, all hand-laid, closed within ticking entirely by hand sewing.

Price, **\$18.50** Each (In One or Two Parts)

From your Ostermoor dealer; or, if he has none in stock, we will ship direct, express prepaid, same day check is received.

We pay transportation charges anywhere in the United States.

Offered only while they last; first come, first served. The supply is limited.

Terms of sale: Cash in advance; none sent C. O. D.

Regular Ostermoor Mattress, 4-inch border, 4 feet 6-inch size, 45 lbs., in two parts, costs \$15.50. The \$30 French Edge Mattress is two inches thicker, weighs 15 lbs. more, has round corners, soft Rolled Edges, closer tufts, finer covering, and is much softer and far more resilient.

Send your name on a postal for our free descriptive book, "The Test of Time," a veritable work of art, 144 pages in two colors, profusely illustrated.

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When ordering, state first, second and even third choice of color of covering, in case all you like are already sold—there'll be no time for correspondence.

139

TEST OF TIME



Extra Thick French Edge Mattress.

An exceedingly luxurious, soft, springy, round-cornered mattress of extra weight, much thicker than regular. Five Inch Inseamed French Edge Border.

4 feet 6 inches wide. 60 lbs., \$30.00 each.



Weight—full 60 lbs. each, 15 lbs. more than regular.

Coverings—beautiful Mercerized French Art Twills, finest quality—pink, blue, yellow, green or lavender, plain or figured. High-grade, dust-proof Satin Finish Ticking, striped in linen effect, or the good, old-fashioned blue and white stripe Herring-bone Ticking.

Built—Not
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Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



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ABSOLUTELY the best five-passenger moderate-priced automobile made. Stylish, roomy, with all the attributes of cars costing as much again, this model deserves your closest inspection. Holder of World's non-stop record for traveling 10,000 miles of road without stopping the motor, winner of both class and sweepstakes trophies in 1910 Munsey Historic Tour. One of the Maxwells that assisted in establishing the best team score in 1910 Glidden Tour. Its achievements are numerous for consistent reliability and efficiency.

THESE BOOKS FREE—"How to Judge an Automobile," a practical treatise on motor cars. Touring Booklet, Maxwell catalogue and other literature to aid you in better deciding your motor car investment, are yours for the asking. A postal will do. Just say, "Mail Books."

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Sold to Dec. 31, 1910 40,726
Sold during Jan. 1911 - 547
Maxwells in use to-day 41,273

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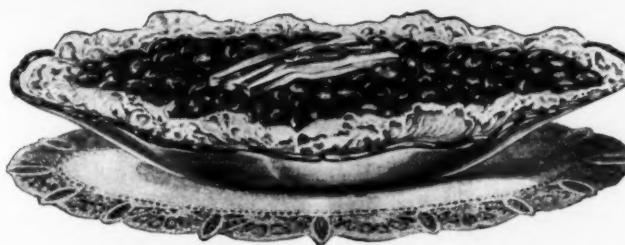
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Last year we paid, on the average, \$2.40 per bushel to get the choicest Michigan beans.

From these beans we pick out just the whitest and plumpest—beans all of one size.

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We bake that tomato sauce—like the pork—with the beans, to secure that delicious blend.

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Each sealed can is sterilized, so the freshly-baked flavor remains until the beans are served.

These beans—the result of 48 years of experience—come to you ready to serve. You can keep a dozen meals on the shelf.

Nobody ever baked beans half so good. As a result, Van Camp's outsell all other brands combined. Such beans are surely not too good for you.

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"The
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Beans are royal food—23% nitrogenous, 84% nutrient. One can serve them in a dozen ways which everybody likes. Every can of Van Camp's means a hearty meal

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Three sizes: 10, 15 and 20 cents per can.

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(103)

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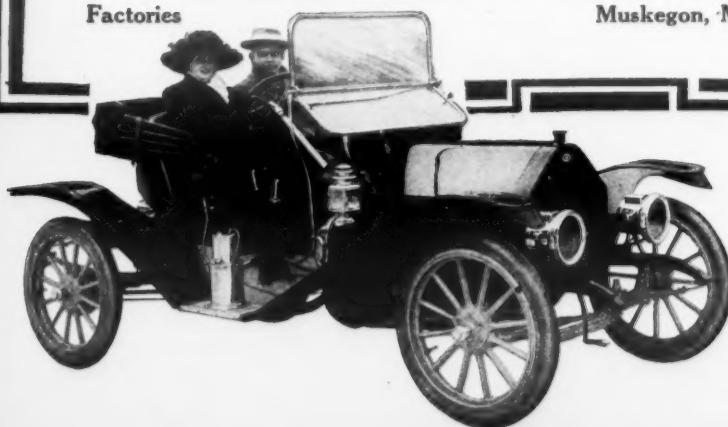
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Steger & Sons Pianos and Natural Player Pianos are accepted everywhere by critical musicians and lovers of music as the highest attainable achievement of the master piano builder's art. Its purchase carries the assurance that money cannot buy better.

If you are contemplating the purchase of a piano—no matter what you think you can afford to pay for it—you owe it to yourself to read our free, handsomely illustrated piano books. They are full of interesting, unbiased, expert advice, pointing out the pitfalls that await the piano buyer who is not an expert—and how to avoid them.

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The "Monroe" is never sold in stores, but direct from the factory to you on our liberal trial offer. Freight Prepaid.

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C The Sterling Debenture Corporation is a medium through which the united financial power of more than 45,000 discriminating investors is applied to the creation and extension of American Enterprises.

C An analysis (Jan. 1, 1911) of our rapidly increasing and worldwide clientele discloses the real power of that idea for which the Sterling Debenture Corporation was organized, and upon which its business has been established. This analysis is herewith published for your consideration.

344	Architects	3284	Merchants
1451	Army and Navy Officers	1667	Physicians
2210	Bank Officials and Directors	687	Professors and Teachers
785	Bookkeepers, Stenographers, etc.	1384	Public Officials
1493	Clergymen (All denominations)	1397	Railway and Steamship Directors and Officials
107	Consuls and Ministers of Foreign Countries	135	Real Estate Dealers
626	Contractors	1217	Retired (Including Trustees)
2855	Corporation Directors and Officials	186	Stock Exchange Members
807	Dentists	162	Students
751	Druggists	1686	Telephone and Telegraph Officials and Operators
728	Electricians	1861	Women, married
2418	Engineers and Skilled Mechanics	1744	Women, unmarried
410	124 Hotel Proprietors and Managers	4538	Miscellaneous Occupations (less than 100 in each classification)
586	Insurance Officials, Directors and Agents	7029	Occupations not given, but probably distributed proportionately among above
321	Journalists, Publishers and Printers		
1474	Lawyers		
988	Manufacturers		

C Such confidence as is evidenced in these figures entails a moral and business responsibility which is not lightly held by the Sterling Debenture Corporation.

C In the reasonable expectation of the larger returns that reward creators of new business values you are often justified in temporarily foregoing such immediate returns as are offered by most listed stocks. We have some interesting information to give you with reference to an investment opportunity of this character. Write for it.



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Nerves like iron—and an appetite like a farm hand—

"Does that appeal to you? Are you tired of being 'always tired'—Nervous, irritable—tired of having your doctor tell you that if you don't knock off and rest you'll go to pieces?" Are you willing to let the

**Davis Electric Medical Battery**

bring back to you the bounding health and buoyancy of youth?

Electricity is the world's greatest restorer—and the Davis Electric Medical Battery is the world's most remarkable discovery for administering it to the human system. You can almost feel it driving out disease and congested conditions. There isn't anything like it for Rheumatism, Lumbago, Sciatica, Constipation, Torpid Liver, Neuralgia, Headaches, Nervous Debility and all forms of Chronic invalidism. It is not a toy—not a mechanical vibrator, but a therapeutic instrument of highest merit—endorsed and used by most prominent physicians.

It is extremely simple—operates on the ordinary lighting circuit, absolutely without shock or punishment—a child can use it.

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the finest flowers and
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bles, plant the best

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AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE

ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRIZE WINNERS IN

January Fiction Competition

THE interest in this competition continues to be as keen and instructive as ever. There has been no indication of its diminution either in the volume of the flow of letters or in the enlightenment they bring to the office of publishers and editors.

One feature of the last competition, which we are inclined to attribute to a wider and deeper interest in the competition, is the number of letters we have received which the writers evidently did not intend to offer for the prizes. Among them are some inquiries for further explanation of the conditions of the competition. These, of course, we could only answer in a manner that may, perhaps, have seemed to the writers as rather vague and unsatisfactory; for we could not, in justice to the great mass of our readers, give assistance, even indirectly, to individuals.

Besides this, our offer was intentionally made in general terms, since we are asking for *opinions* rather than for correct answers to specific questions. We have been asking for the *ideas* of our readers, without any purpose to test the accuracy of their general information.

The prizes for the January competition have been awarded as follows:

First Prize of \$50.00 to
E. V. JORDAN, Waltham, Mass.

Second Prize of \$30.00 to
LUCY B. HAUG, Knoxville, Tenn.

Third Prize of \$20.00 to
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Notice of another competition is to be found elsewhere in the advertising pages



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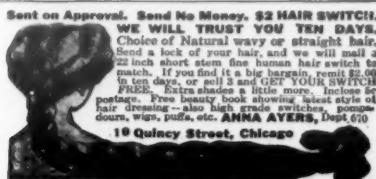


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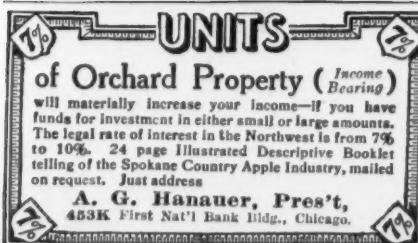


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IF YOUR blood is impure, if you have pimples, freckles, wrinkles, blackheads, redness of face or nose, a muddy, sallow skin, or any blemish on or under the skin, you need Dr. James P. Campbell's Safe Arsenic Complexion Wafers.

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The Bissell has displaced the dust pan and the corn broom, the primitive instruments of torture; has robbed sweeping day of its terrors, has given housewives and servants time for other more agreeable tasks, and performing the work of sweeping in two quarters the time the corn broom requires and with 95 per cent less effort. The

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You can be Strong—
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You can be free from Chronic Ailments—every organ of your body strong as nature intended.

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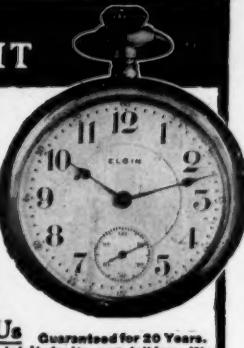
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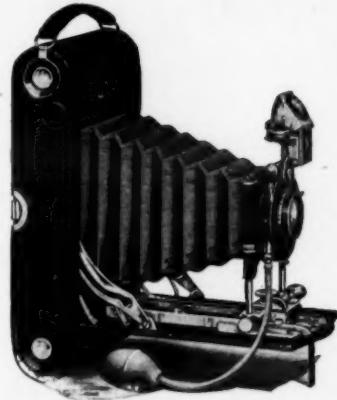
We will gladly tell you about this newest member of the Racine family, and will give other boat details. Send for the story of "The Cruiser of the Bass Lake," which will help you select the boat you need.

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We wish to ascertain the views and tastes of our readers, both as to our own and other publications, for we believe they should be better judges of what they want than professional readers.

Three prizes are offered for the best suggestions:

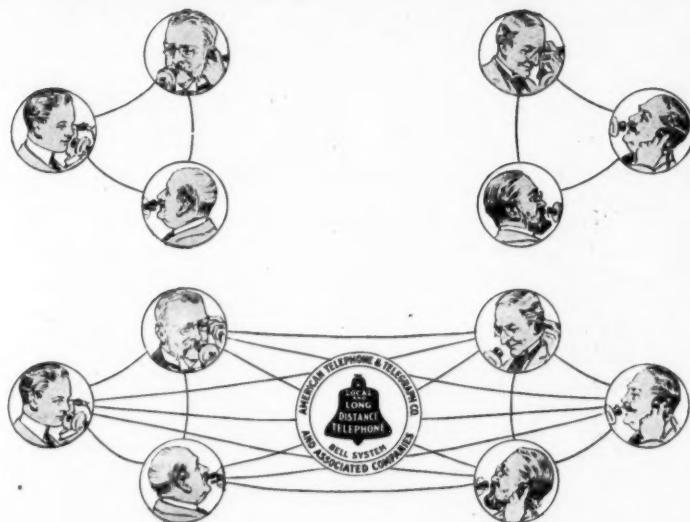
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No matter how the groups are located or how they are connected by exchanges, combination in-

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Our best efforts, extending over twenty-five years, have produced the "ONYX" Quality which appeals to your Best Judgment.

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990 S. The New "Chiffon Hose"—Women's "ONYX" Sheer Gauze Lisle—Black, Tan and White with "Dub-l Top" and "Duplex" splicing at heel and toe. Just what its name implies.

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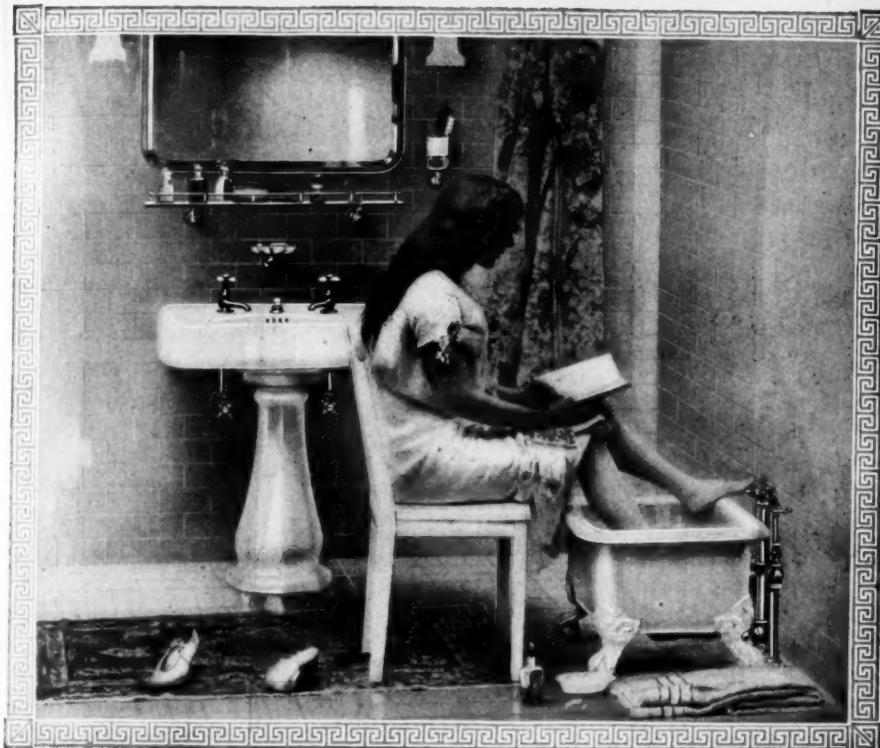
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have a delightful, mild flavor that the *Swift's Premium* method of curing gives them. This flavor is so mild and so devoid of the strong, salty taste that it is not necessary to parboil *Swift's Premium Ham* before broiling or frying. In fact, the parboiling tends to destroy rather than improve its taste. Try it next time without parboiling and see for yourself.

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